Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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OPINION METER

This week's poll:
Should there be more than just one legal cockfighting arena on Saipan?

Let your voice be heard!
Go to
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to cast your vote.

109 DAYS without a government budget for FY 2009

INSIDE

Hudson Miracle
A cool-headed pilot maneuvered his crippled jetliner over New York City and ditched it in the Hudson River, saving all 155 on board.

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Rescue Mission
An army general said he hopes to rescue three kidnapped Red Cross workers in the southern Philippines.

MAHARLIKA...Page 13

Historic meeting of all PSS Commissioners. **PAGE 2**
Elocution contest winners to speak at MLK Day. **PAGE 3**

Villagomez pleads not guilty

Santos couple submit similar plea

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Lt. Gov. Timothy P. Villagomez and co-defendants James and Joaquina Santos yesterday pleaded not guilty to the new bribery and other charges filed against them in federal court.

Villagomez

"Not guilty, your honor," said Villagomez when U.S. District Court for the NMI chief judge Alex Munson asked how he pleads to the charges contained in the superseding indictment.

Villagomez was with Guam attorney Delia Lujan, daughter of Micronesia's popular defense attorney, David J. Lujan.

The Santos couple also pleaded not guilty to the same charges. Their attorneys—Ramon Quichocho and Victorino Torres—appeared at the hearing.

The superseding indictment charges the defendants with bribery concerning a program receiving federal funds, conspiracy to defraud and to commit of-

See VILLAGOMEZ on Page 4

'Door not totally closed to Russians, Chinese tourists'

Hartman: New administration may affect form of final regulations

Alex Hartman, an immigration policy advisor at the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Policy, explains the Guam-CNMI visa waiver to government officials, business leaders and community members yesterday at the American Memorial Park's Visitors' Center.

KRISTI EATON

"It's leaving the door open, which I think does provide some flexibility. I know it's not as open as the door is now, but it's not a done process. There is opportunity for change in the future."

By KRISTI EATON
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REPORTER

The new Guam-CNMI visa waiver program is not closing the door on the Russian and Chinese tourism markets, a U.S. Department of Homeland Security official told more than 100 people during an information session yesterday at Ameri-

See DOOR on Page 4

IN BRIEF

- The security concerns may be addressed in the next 12 to 18 months, at which point DHS would determine if the two groups would be eligible for the program.
- To learn more: http://www.dhs.gov/xnews/releases/pr_1231970813067.shtm
- Comments about the regulations can be mailed during the next 60 days to: Border Security Regulations branch, Office of International Trade, Customs and Border Protection, Mint Annes 799 9th Street, NW, Washington DC 20001

Local

ROSELYN MONROYO

Past and present Commissioners of the CNMI Public School System made their historic first meeting yesterday at the Chamolinian room of the Hyatt Regency Saipan yesterday. From left are Dr. Rita A. Sablan, Dr. David Borja, Dr. Rita H, Inos, former Rep. William Torres, Dr. Elizabeth Rechebei and Henry Sablan.

Historic 1st meeting of past, present PSS Commissioners

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

All past and present Commissioners of the CNMI Public School System made their historic first meeting yesterday at the Chamolinian Room of the Hyatt Regency Saipan.

The Commissioners (in order) are Henry Sablan, Dr. Elizabeth Rechebei, former Rep. William Torres, Dr. Rita H. Inos, Dr. David Borja, and Dr. Rita A. Sablan (current).

Also present during the meeting were members of the Board of Education headed by Lucy Blanco-Maratita and legal counsel.

Board member Jonas Manibusan Barcinas, who is the Dandan Elementary School principal, said the purpose of the meeting is to share the hope for a better PSS for the CNMI's children.

He said this is particularly important due to the current challenges and economic crisis that the CNMI is confronting.

Each former commissioners gave insights about these challenges in the educational front and each commended the current commissioner for organizing the meeting.

Henry Sablan, the first PSS Commissioner, stressed the need to be flexible with the multi-cultural student population in the CNMI.

They also shared some of their experiences during their stint at the helm of PSS and how to improve the educational system.

"It is very historic because this is the first time ever that all the six PSS Commissioners gathered in a meeting like this," Barcinas said.

Art East, Street Beat 'back2back' tonight

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

R&B band Art East is composed of vocalist and manager Jason Sta. Ana, bassist Roderick Gulfan, keyboardist Ryan Yamar, guitarist J.V. Calicdan, drummer Melbourne Cenina, and vocalists Eric Adriano, Jem Llamazan, and Donna Esteban.

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

The new year coincides with a new act coming to Saipan and R&B band Art East will make its debut tonight when it headlines Club V's 11th back-to-back party with outgoing group Street Beat.

Fresh from gigs in Malate and Ortigas in the Philippines, the eight-person Art East band is led by vocalist and manager Jason Sta. Ana and is made up of bassist Roderick Gulfan, keyboardist Ryan Yamar, guitarist J.V. Calicdan, drummer Melbourne Cenina, and vocalists Eric Adriano, Jem Llamazan, and Donna Esteban.

The group's ages range from 22 to 32 years old and they've been playing together since 2007.

While Saipan marks the first time Art East will be performing abroad, Sta. Ana said members of the band are no newcomers to off-island gigs as they have performed outside the Philippines in the past, albeit separately in different bands.

Speaking for the rest of his bandmates, Sta. Ana said the Commonwealth is definitely a welcome change from the hustle and bustle of Metro Manila.

For one, Saipan's sandy beaches and quiet, laid-back atmosphere reminds the group of Boracay, one of the Philippine's more popular beach resorts.

He also said they are already looking forward to entertaining Saipan's party habitués at Club V as well as Southern Cross. They are also expected to perform at Saipan Grand Hotel's latest poolside event, which will be offered soon.

Like all musicians, Sta. Ana said the band's ultimate goal is to record an album, but while that dream remains on hold they are just happy to play beautiful music and entertain the crowd with their renditions of chart-toppers by Rihanna, Beyonce, and Chris Brown, among others.

Club V's one-night only, 11th back-to-back party with Art East and Street Beat will start at 7:30pm tonight. Door charge is $5 with one complimentary drink.

The event is sponsored by Chivas Regal, Docomo Pacific, Miller Lite, Stress Free, Saloon De Manila, and Shirley's Coffee Shop. For more information, call 234-6601 ext. 301-302.

BIRTHDAY SHOUT-OUT

Happy birthday Mary! Enjoy your day and may all your wishes come true! Love always, the DES family.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Elocution contest winners to speak at MLK Day

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

The winners of the elocution contest for the 2009 Martin Luther King Day activities will be performing their entries on the actual day of celebration on Monday, Jan. 19, at the American Memorial Park.

Dayanara Flores, an 8th grader at Hopwood Junior High School won the elocution contest in the 6th-8th grade category, while Bianca Blanco, an 11th grader at the Grace Christian Academy, won in the 9th-12th grade category.

Flores and Blanco will receive awards, cash prizes and gift items sponsored by IT&E, MegaByte and Hollywood Theaters.

Flores and Blanco will also deliver their winning speeches during the 4pm-6pm program Monday.

The essay winners will also receive similar awards and prizes.

Dylan Cabrera and Frances Rosemarie G. Santos, both 3rd graders at Kagman Elementary School, won in the 3rd-5th grades category. Eighth grader Yvonnalynn Salalila of Hopwood Jr. High School won in the 6th-8th grades category, while 10th grader Joseph Martin of Marianas High School won in the 9th-12th grade category.

The African-American Cultural Preservation Committee on Saipan released yesterday the list of winners in the "What Would Martin Say" essay and elocution contests.

The theme was intended for students to express their views about the victory of Barack Obama, the first black president of the United States, and its relevance to MLK Day.

MLK Day activities will start Monday at 1pm with a forum. After the forum, there will be a Mini-March through Garapan at 3pm.

The keynote speaker of the event will be MarshaRose Joyner, who was on Saipan as an 8-year-old girl during the closing years of World War II from 1946 to 1949. She will share her unique memories and perspectives of that period of time.

The AACPC expressed their appreciation to the Northern Mariana Council for the Humanities and American Memorial Park for their generous support.

The group also thanked the students from all the schools throughout the CNMI who participated and encourage all to attend the commemoration activities.

There will be no classes on that day since it is an official non-working holiday.

Aside from the commendation rites, other MLK Day activities include yesterday's workshops in different schools on Saipan. The workshops will continue on Tuesday, Jan. 20.

There will also be an inaugural celebration dinner with the theme "Fulfilling the Dream" at Bud's Bar at 6pm-8pm with a $15 cost.

In the morning, the 8th grade class of the Saipan Seventh-Day Adventist School will hold its 3rd Annual Freedom Run.

The five-kilometer run is a fundraising event for the 8th grade class trip as well as an event to pay tribute to the great civil rights leader.

The 3rd Annual Freedom Run will begin at 5:15pm at the Garapan Fishing Base and end at the Kilili Beach pavilion.

The registration fee is $10 and all finishers will be eligible for prizes at a drawing to be held after the race. Registration for the run will begin at 4:30pm.

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial signed the bill enacting Martin Luther King Jr. Day as an official CNMI holiday three years ago.

Final days to submit nominations for '09 Employer Support Award

Seven Guam-CNMI nominations received to date

ARLINGTON, Va.—The beginning of the new year marks the final days for Guam National Guard and Reserve members and their families to nominate supportive employers for the 2009 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award.

With seven nominations already submitted, the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, a Department of Defense agency, continues to encourage nominations of employers who have gone above and beyond in their support of military employees.

Nominations will be accepted at www.FreedomAward.mil through Jan. 19, 2009.

The Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award is the highest recognition given by the U.S. government to employers for their outstanding support of their employees who serve in the National Guard and Reserve.

Fifteen recipients from across the nation will be selected, representing small employers, large employers and public sector employers. The 2009 recipients will be announced in the spring and honored in Washington, D.C. at the 14th annual Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award ceremony Sept. 17, 2009.

The Freedom Award was instituted in 1996 under the auspices of the National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve to recognize exceptional support from the employer community.

A local ceremony, scheduled to take place this year, will recognize Guam and CNMI employers that go "Above and Beyond" to provide extraordinary support of its employees who serve in the National Guard and Reserve.

Some examples of extraordinary support include employers who have reviewed and amended their current human resources policies to ensure compliance with the Uniformed Services Employment and Re-Employment Rights Act Law. Many employers provide "Above and Beyond" support with pay differential to offset the loss of wages, and extension of health care benefits which complement coverage provided by the military when their employees are mobilized.

In order for an employer to qualify for a state award, such as the Pro Patria or Above and Beyond Award, or the National Freedom Award, the employer must have, as a minimum, been nominated by one of its employees to receive a Patriot Award and have signed a Statement of Support.

If you believe you have an employer who deserves a local or a national employer award, but are unsure what the eligibility criteria is, please contact Captain Josephine Blas, Public Affairs Director for the ESGR Guam-CNMI Committee at 735-0456 for more information. ***(PR)***

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
COMMONWEALTH BOARD OF NURSE EXAMINERS

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 11, the Commonwealth Board of Nurse Examiners Board of Directors, is hereby giving notice that the Board will be meeting Tuesday and Wednesday, January 20-21, 2009. The meeting will be held at the Board's Conference Room, #1336 Ascencion Drive, Capitol Hill, Saipan, from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm.

AGENDA

I. Preliminary Matters –
1. Roll Call

II. Call to Order

III. Adoption of Minutes –
1. November 12, 2008

IV. Adoption of Agenda

V. Unfinished Business –
1. Rules and Regulations
2. Amendment of Nurse Practice Act 2003

VI. Election of Officers

VI. New Business –
1. Discussion of office relocation.
2. Miscellaneous

VII. Review and Approval of New Applications

VIII. Adjournment

/s/ Elaine Marie Camacho, RN
Chairperson

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9910(a), the Eleventh CNMI State Board of Education hereby gives notice that there will be a Regular Board Meeting on Thursday, January 22, 2009 at 9:00 a.m. at the BOE Conference Room, 2nd Floor, NMI Retirement Fund Bldg., Capitol Hill, Saipan.

AGENDA

I. Preliminary
- a. Call to Order
- b. Roll Call
- c. Adoption of Agenda
- d. Adoption of Minutes
  - i. October 30, 2008

II. Public Comments

III. Reports
- a. Chair
- b. Board Committees
  - i. CIA
  - ii. CIP
  - iii. FPA
  - iv. Special Education & Early Childhood
  - v. LIA
  - vi. School Reform
  - vii. Private Schools
  - viii. Non-Public School Representative
- c. Commissioner of Education

IV. Old Business

V. New Business
- a. AmeriCorps Grant application
- b. Revision/update of CNMI History book
- c. SPED Pay Differential Proposed Regulation
- d. Head Start Organizational Chart Amendment No. 6
- e. Approval of 2008-2009 Head Start Community Assessment
- f. The State Performance Plans (SPP) and Annual Performance Reports (APR)
- g. Comments re HB 16-135
- h. Comments re HB 16-178
- i. FMLA Changes
- j. Election of Officers
- k. Appointment of Committee Chairs & Committee Assignments

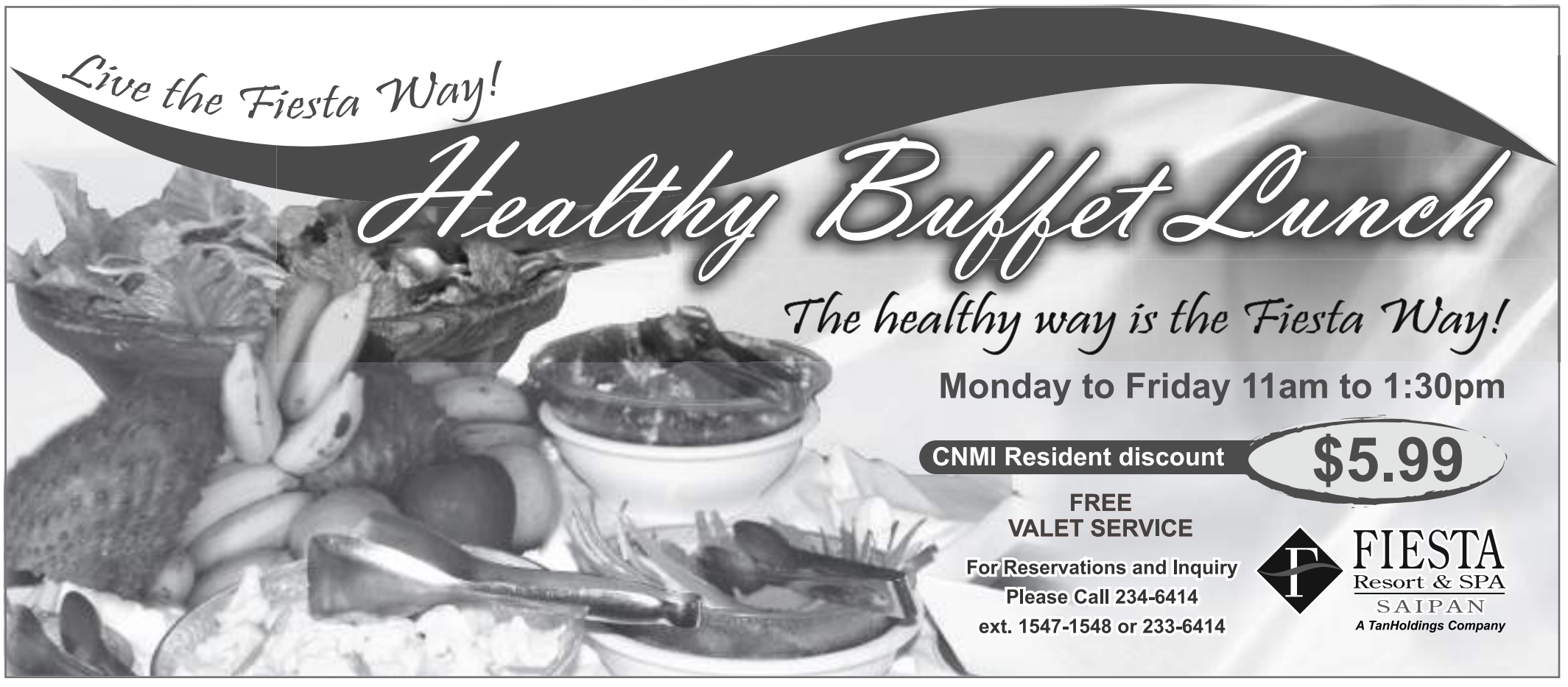
VI. Executive Session
- a. Legal Updates
- b. Personnel
- c. Other matters

VII. Miscellaneous Matters

VIII. Discussion of Agenda for next Board meeting

IX. Adjournment

[1] Pursuant to BOE Policy 0415, public comments are limited to 30 minutes. We ask that remarks be limited to 3 minutes each. Everyone is welcomed to submit written comments.
[3] Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9912, the Board may vote to meet in executive session at any time.



Camacho wants govt ethics test for public officials

By KRISTI EATON
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REPORTER

Rep. Joseph Camacho has proposed a bill requiring government officials to take an annual ethic tests.

"The Legislature finds that many public officials, especially the newly elected officials must be educated on the Commonwealth Government Ethics code. Although the office of the Public Auditor has conducted many training sessions on the Government Ethics Code throughout the years, attendance at such ethics training sessions has been voluntary on the part of public officials," the bill states.

Camacho notes that the number government corruption cases has increased in recent years, "which in part may be a clear indication of the lack of knowledge and understanding of the Government Ethics Code among public officials."

Under the proposed legislation, each public official must pay $100 of his or her own money for the program fee. The OPA will publish the results annually in one of the Commonwealth's newspapers. The program would start this year.

NMC to erect new building for several offices

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

The Northern Marianas College will soon start erecting a new building called Building M that would house several important offices.

The ribbon cutting for this new building is scheduled Feb. 6 starting at 10am.

The project is located on the western side of the college's As Terlaje campus.

Building M is reserved for the offices of Languages and Humanities Department, English Language Institute and the English Learning Laboratory.

This project is funded by the Northern Marinas College Foundation.

Meanwhile, the last day of registration for the upcoming 2009 NMC Spring Semester will end today, Jan. 17.

Over 500 students showed up at the start of the registration last Monday, Jan. 12.

The start of classes is scheduled on Tuesday, Jan. 20.

School officials are expected to release by Tuesday the total number of enrollees for the next semester.

The college organized an admission workshop on Jan. 10, with some 45 students in attendance.

NMC also held the Financial Aid Workshop, which was attended by about 300 participants.

NMC has been on probation since February 2007 and was put on showcause in February this year because, according to Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, the school did not address previous concerns.

The accreditation commission is expected to issue its decision at the end of this month whether to retain the college's accreditation or not.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

DEQ brigade sets COP cleanup

The Division of Environmental Quality cleanup brigade will be picking up trash at Coral Ocean Point (Unai Dangkulo) on Feb. 7.

Thos who would like to volunteer may join the group on Saturday, Feb. 7, at 8am. Volunteers will clean until 10am and break for drinks and then continue, if needed.

This month, outstanding brigade volunteers who participated in at least 10 monthly cleanups will receive a brigade cap and those who participated in at least three cleanups will receive a green brigade t-shirt.

The DEQ cleanup brigade began in 1996 and continues to maintain clean, healthy beaches.

For more information about volunteering, contact the DEQ office at 664-8500. (DEQ)

Marianas High School schedule

Jan. 19 No classes (Martine Luther King Day)
Jan. 29 3rd-4th Period Exams
Jan. 30 1st-2nd Period Exams
Feb. 2 No classes (PSS Professional Development)
Feb. 11 2nd Quarter Report Card Day/Open House, 4pm-6pm (student released at 1pm, parents pick up report cards from Homeroom teachers)
Feb. 16 No classes (President's Day)
Feb. 17 No classes (PSS Professional Development)
Feb. 27 Cultural Day, 9am-3pm MHS Campus, Open to the public

For questions and concerns, contact 237-3206. ***(PR)***

Youth Congress to hold 2nd regular session today

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

The 11th CNMI Youth Congress will hold its second regular session today with 13 resolutions calendared for discussion and adoption.

The first resolution to be tackled pertains to the mandate of the Department of Public Safety to remove dead animals from public highways and roads and then contact the Department of Public Health's Health and Sanitation Division for its proper disposal.

The resolution was introduced by Adeleyah C. Mojica.

Three resolutions introduced by Alana May Leon Guerrero, Mojica and John A. Ayuyu intend to congratulate the awardees in the Public School System 2009 Teacher of the Year, including James Phillips of Marianas High School (overall), Rosa M. Sablan of Kagman Elementary School (Teacher Aide), and Patricia Aguon Cruz of MHS (Support Staff).

Another resolution by Jessel M. Messa is to request the 16th CNMI Legislature and DPH to appropriate sufficient funds for health clinics in Kagman High School, Rota High School, Saipan Southern, and Tinian High School.

Mojica is also requesting all mayors to provide recycle bins within villages and public schools to promote recycling and provide for educational resources on recycling.

Leon Guerrero wants DPS, Office of Adult Probation and Board of Parole to implement stricter enforcement and monitoring of registered sexually violent predators.

Min Seon Park, Aesha D. Sablan and Charlyn S. Techur introduced a resolution commending the outstanding accomplishment of the Associated Students of NMC for providing continual support in both academic and recreational activities for the student body of NMC.

Johora A. Paedal is requesting the Legislature to appropriate sufficient funding to purchase sport equipment for Rota High School, Rota Junior High School, and Sinapalo Elementary School.

Maegan Norita is requesting lawmakers to appropriate funds on the repair and maintenance of the beach side pavilions and site beautification in the northern precincts.

Sunny Frank Aldan is requesting the Legislature to accommodate students' participation from each senatorial district in the Close Up program.

Aldan also wants the Legislature to convene sessions during the upcoming 2009 Youth Summit.

He also wants the Legislature to amend the Saipan Higher Education Financial Assistance Act to include high school honor students taking college courses.

Ayuyu also introduced a resolution to request the Legislature to appropriate funds for a Rota High School Gymnasium to serve the youth and the community of Rota by establishing a sports recreational center.

DOOR

From Page 1

can Memorial Park.

New interim federal regulations do not include China and Russia among the countries included in the joint waiver program that will go into effect June 1, when federal immigration law will begin to apply to the CNMI under the Consolidated Natural Resources Act of 2008. There is a possibility the law's implementation date could be pushed back up to 180 days.

The new regulations are the first step in the process, said Alex Hartman, an immigration policy adviser at DHS.

"It's leaving the door open, which I think does provide some flexibility. I know it's not as open as the door is now, but it's not a done process. There is opportunity for change in the future."

Security concerns

The regulations state that, although DHS realizes the economic impact of China and Russia to tourism in the CNMI, the two countries will not be included in the program because of political, security, and law enforcement concerns. Some of the concerns hindering the inclusion of Russian and Chinese tourists into the program include high nonimmigrant visa refusal rates and concerns with repatriation of citizens to their home country.

The security concerns could be addressed in the next 12 to 18 months, at which point DHS would determine if the two groups would be eligible for the program.

Hartman noted that when he returns to Washington D.C. next week, a new administration, including a new Secretary of Homeland Security, will assume office. This could impact how fast the new security measures could be implemented, he added.

Also, for the next 60 days people can submit comments about the new regulations, which will be taken into consideration if amendments are made, he said.

Two considerations

Several audience members made repeated reference to the impact the loss of the Russian and Chinese tourism markets would have on the CNMI's economy.

Hartman said there were two considerations used when determining a country's eligibility for the visa-waiver program: economic benefit to the Commonwealth and security concerns. Although Chinese and Russian tourists were found to provide economic benefit, the security concerns outweighed those benefits.

The grouping together of Guam and the CNMI into one program was also a concern for some in the audience because, they said, it would give no competitive advantage to the CNMI over Guam.

"The way that Congress passed the law and it was signed by the president, it created one program. DHS did just that— it made one program. I don't think we have much flexibility there. I think the benefit there intended by Congress is to allow for longer periods of stay to travel between the two sets of islands and spend more money."

Tourists from the included countries will be allowed to stay for up to 45 days.

Vague

Commerce Secretary Michael Ada questioned what sort of timetable or prompt would be used by DHS to reconsider the inclusion of Russia and China in the program.

"If it's left as vague as it in your presentation, there will be nothing in place to prompt DHS to say we now need to revisit," Ada said.

Hartman agreed that there is no specific timeline but the issue would not fall on deaf ears.

"It is not an issue that will fall off the radar," he said, adding that DHS is cognizant of the economic impact and will communicate as much to the new administration.

The Guam-CNMI visa-waiver program will allow citizens of the following countries to enter Guam and the CNMI without a visa: Australia, Brunei, Japan, Malaysia, Nauru, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, United Kingdom, and Hong Kong.

USCIS

Also, officials from the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, who handle immigration benefits, were on island the last two days to meet with local groups and officials.

Sometime between March 1 and June 1, USCIS will open an application support center on Saipan, allowing people the ability to get fingerprinted on island as opposed to traveling to Guam. An information officer will also be a part of the support center to help those who might have questions about their status or benefits.

VILLAGOMEZ

From Page 1

fenses against the U.S., wire fraud, and theft concerning a program receiving federal funds.

Only the bribery charges were new as the remaining charges were the same ones already filed against the three defendants.

The three also waived their right to a speedy trial in order for them to have more time to study the new charges in preparation for their defense.

Munson granted the defendants' request and set the new trial for March 30, 2009, at 9am. It was the second time the defendants waived their right to a speedy trial.

Munson said the defendants shall remain at liberty with the same terms and conditions as the court had previously imposed.

Former Gov. Pedro Tenorio and his wife, Sophia, were among the relatives, family members and friends of Villagomez and the Santos couple who watched the proceedings.

After the hearing, attorney Lujan told *Saipan Tribune* it was just a superseding indictment and that Villagomez pleaded not guilty. "We have no further comment other than what we stated in the hearing," he said.

Attorney Quichocho, counsel for Joaquina Santos, told *Saipan Tribune* that they're still reviewing the superseding indictment.

"So we just deal with it as we approach the trial," Quichocho said.

The new charge alleges that Villagomez accepted a $15,000 bribe from the Santos couple for approving the purchase of Rydlyme, a cleaning and de-scaling chemical, for the Commonwealth Utilities Corp.

The Santos couple were also charged with bribery for allegedly offering the $15,000 to Villagomez.

According to the indictment, on Dec. 7, 2007, James Santos signed a check in the amount of $15,000 drawn upon an account belonging to himself and Joaquina Santos, and made payable to Villagomez.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Eric O'Malley said that on the same day, Villagomez deposited the check into his personal bank account.

A day before that, Dec. 6, 2007, Joaquina Santos allegedly deposited a CUC Operations Fund check in the amount of $50,000 into an account belonging to Blue Pacific as payment for Rydlyme.

O'Malley alleged that on Jan. 15, 2008, a co-conspirator, acting on behalf of CUC, authorized payment of $10,000 to Blue Pacific.

The prosecutor said that on Jan. 16, 2008, Joaquina Santos deposited another CUC Operations Fund check into an account belonging to Blue Pacific.

James Santos was the alleged owner and operator of a company called ISLAS, which supplied CUC with Rydlyme. ISLAS was then allegedly reconstituted under a different name, Blue Pacific.

Hollywood Theaters enjoying better times

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

Close to eight months after it reopened, Hollywood Theater-Saipan Megaplex has been doing well, due in large part to lower power rates.

Willy Santos, the company's general manager, said Hollywood Theater's current cash flow is noticeably improved than in April 2008 when it was forced to close temporarily due to exorbitant billings from the Commonwealth Utilities Corp.

"Business overall has been noticeably busier since reopening. Anytime that we're charged a lower rate per kilowatt hour, improved revenues will be realized. What still needs to be seen is if the higher kilowatt rate that we were charged earlier this year versus what were being charged now will help us or hurt us with what we have budgeted for utility costs this year," he said.

At the time of its over month-long hiatus, CUC's per kilowatt hour rate was 0.373. It, however, has come down considerably since then to 0.270 in November 2008 and 0.207 in December 2008. The current average per kilowatt hour rate is 0.24.

The development has been a boon not only to the lone cinema facility in the CNMI but to its customers as well.

"A week has not gone by that a person has not approached me and told me how happy they are that we have reopened," said Santos.

Curiously though, Hollywood Theater seemed to have not been affected by the closure of Blockbuster in October last year.

Said Santos, "We had a great public response since our reopening but Blockbuster was still open then. Even though they were the largest DVD rental on island there are still several similar businesses serving the community."

Hollywood Theater unexpectedly shut down last April 18 with Wallace Theatres citing the island's bad economy and rising operational costs as the reasons for the company's decision to temporarily halt operations.

It, however, reopened in May 23, 2008, after Wallace Theatres reviewed the financial viability of the theater and the Oregon-based company received a positive reaction from the public.

During its absence, video rentals on Saipan enjoyed brisk sales with one prominent outlet reporting a 20-percent spike in business since Hollywood Theater closed.

A company led by Los Angeles-based talk show host Steve Mason also showed interest in operating the cinema complex.

Mason, president of Flagship Theatres, said his company entered informal talks with Wallace Theatres to reopen the seven-theater cinema complex.

The seven-cinema Hollywood Theaters features stadium seating, giant screens and Dolby Digital Sound. Auditoriums feature high-back reclining seats that give each patron an unobstructed view, while cozying-up in "love-seat" style chairs that feature retractable cup-holder armrests.

Hollywood Theater-Saipan Megaplex, located next to Price Costco, opened with much fanfare in Sept. 8, 1999.

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

The Hollywood Theater-Saipan Megaplex in San Jose.

Senate passes bill to create autism commission

The Senate this week unanimously passed a bill that proposes developing a state plan of services for people with autism.

The House of Representatives earlier passed the bill, and it is now with the governor.

Rep. Heinz Hofschneider, who proposed the legislation, stated in the bill that autism is the fastest growing serious developmental disability in the United States and the Commonwealth.

He said experts estimate that two to six children out of every 1,000 will have autism.

The lawmaker noted that the economic impact of autism in the U.S. is more than $90 billion annually and is expected to more than double in the next decade.

But Rita Sablan, Public School System education commissioner, and Lucy Blanco-Maratita, Board of Education chairwoman, have opposed the legislation.

Blanco-Maratita and Sablan said the bill seems to circumvent certain local and federal regulations of both education and governmental entities.

Blanco-Maratita and Sablan said the Board of Education Standing Committee on Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs is unsure why CAC would be able to exist outside channels of government that provide for checks and balances.

They said the Committee cautions that CAC would still have to go through proper channels when requesting information from PSS about its students.

The two education officials said the CAC does not and cannot dictate to PSS.

Blanco-Maratita and Sablan also noted that the Committee's concern is that many departments within PSS are already burdened with a heavy workload and are short-staffed. ***(Kristi Eaton)***

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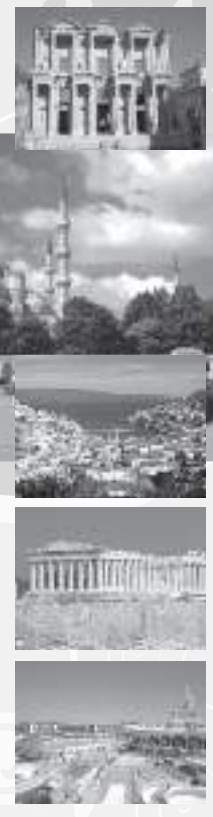

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NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Pursuant to 4 CMC, Div. 7, Section 7306 (i) of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Oceania Insurance Corporation is making its intention known of increasing the company's paid-up capital and surplus in accordance with this statute.

LAURIE STURGES
Manager
Oceania Insurance Corporation
1st Flr. Chong's Bldg.
Pale Arnold Rd., Gualo Rai
PMB 557 Box 10000
Saipan, MP 96950

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NOTICE OF SALE
UNDER POWER OF SALE
IN DEED OF TRUST

VANESSA C. IGINOEF/ VALERIO MENDIOLA CABRERA AND MARIANA ALDAN CABRERA (collectively "Trustor"), on or about June 21, 1985, gave and delivered to the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation ("Trustee"), acting on behalf of the United States Department of Agriculture, Rural Development Office ("USDA"), formerly known as Farmers Home Administration, United States of America ("FmHA"), a Deed of Trust upon certain real property hereinafter described, which Deed of Trust was recorded on June 26, 1985, under Document No. 85-1210 to secure payment of a Promissory Note of the Trustor to the Trustee, acting on behalf of the USDA, Rural Development Office.

The Deed of Trust and this Notice of Sale affect the property hereafter described:

LOT NO. 011 H 16, CONTAINING AN AREA OF 621 SQUARE METERS, MORE OR LESS, AS MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED ON DRAWING/CADASTRAL PLAT NUMBER 011 H 00, THE ORIGINAL OF WHICH WAS REGISTERED WITH THE LAND REGISTRY AS DOCUMENT NUMBER 702, ON THE 1ST DAY OF MARCH, 1971.

The Trustor has defaulted on payment of the Note secured by the Deed of Trust, and by reason of said default, Trustee issued its Notice of Default and served to Trustor on November 24, 2008. More than thirty (30) days have passed since the default notice was served on Trustor and said default has not been cured.

Pursuant to 2 CMC § 4622(b)(2), NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Trustee will, on February 13, 2009, at 10:00 a.m., at the office of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation, Garapan, P.O. Box 500514, Saipan, MP 96950, under power of sale contained in the Deed of Trust, sell the above described parcel of real property at public auction to the highest qualified bidder, to satisfy the obligations secured by said Deed of Trust. The minimum bid offer shall be not less than **$56,150.00**. Sealed bids will be opened at the auction and those present will be given the opportunity to submit an additional bid, thereby, outbidding the highest sealed bid amount received by NMHC and opened on the date of the auction.

Sealed bids must be addressed to Ms. Merced M. Tomokane, Acting Chairwoman of the Board, Northern Marianas Housing Corporation, P. O. Box 500514, Saipan, MP 96950 and must also be received no later than **February 12, 2009, at 4:00 p.m. All bids received from outside the Commonwealth must be received no later than February 12, 2009 at 4:00 p.m. Untimely sealed bids will be rejected.**

The sale shall be without warranty as to the title or interest to be conveyed or as to the property under the Deed of Trust, other than that the Trustee is the lawful holder of such Deed of Trust. The purchase price shall be payable by cash, certified check or cashier's check to NMHC and shall be paid within 72 hours from time of sale.

Trustee reserves the right to reject any and all bids and to cancel or extend the date, time and place for sale of such property. Any prospective buyer must be a person authorized by the Constitution and laws of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands to hold title to real property in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Dated this 12th day of January, 2009.

/s/ JOSHUA T. SASAMOTO
Corporate Director

NMHC is an equal employment and fair housing public agency

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XIX, Issue No. 15

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EDITORIAL

A smarter stimulus

Two things seem certain as congressional leaders formulate a new economic stimulus proposal with President-elect Barack Obama: The bill will become law, and it will cost a prodigious, deficit-doubling amount of money. We understand the reasoning behind the push for a fiscal pick-me-up that's massive in scale; it takes a lot to move a $14-trillion economy that's faltering as badly as this one. Nevertheless, we're worried that the proposal is missing something important. It needs to help revive the economy, certainly, but it also should have a larger ambition. It should help build a strong, 21st century foundation for U.S. businesses and workers so they can compete more effectively in global markets.

As Obama heard repeatedly on the campaign trail, communities in many parts of the country are ill-prepared for the changes wrought by globalization. Many voters urged him to stop the erosion of U.S. manufacturing, protect struggling industries against foreign competitors and make it costlier for employers to export jobs. But the capabilities of developing nations are steadily advancing, so there's no way to stop the next industrial revolution. We need to equip students, workers and communities for that revolution. For starters, that means making broadband networks as ubiquitous and robust as they are in other developed nations. It means improving math and science education, and retooling vocational training programs.

Obama shares some of this ambition—witness his interest in promoting renewable energy sources through the proposal's spending and tax provisions. But some of the biggest spending programs being discussed would simply use federal dollars to help states and cities maintain the status quo. Yes, there are bridges that need to be repaired and highways that need more lanes. But let's also build smart highways and vehicles that move people and freight faster and with fewer accidents. Yes, there are state health programs running out of funds. But let's speed the computerization of medical records and treatment systems to get more out of our healthcare dollars. As we struggle to pull ourselves out of this recession, let's not aim for the bottom rungs on the ladder.

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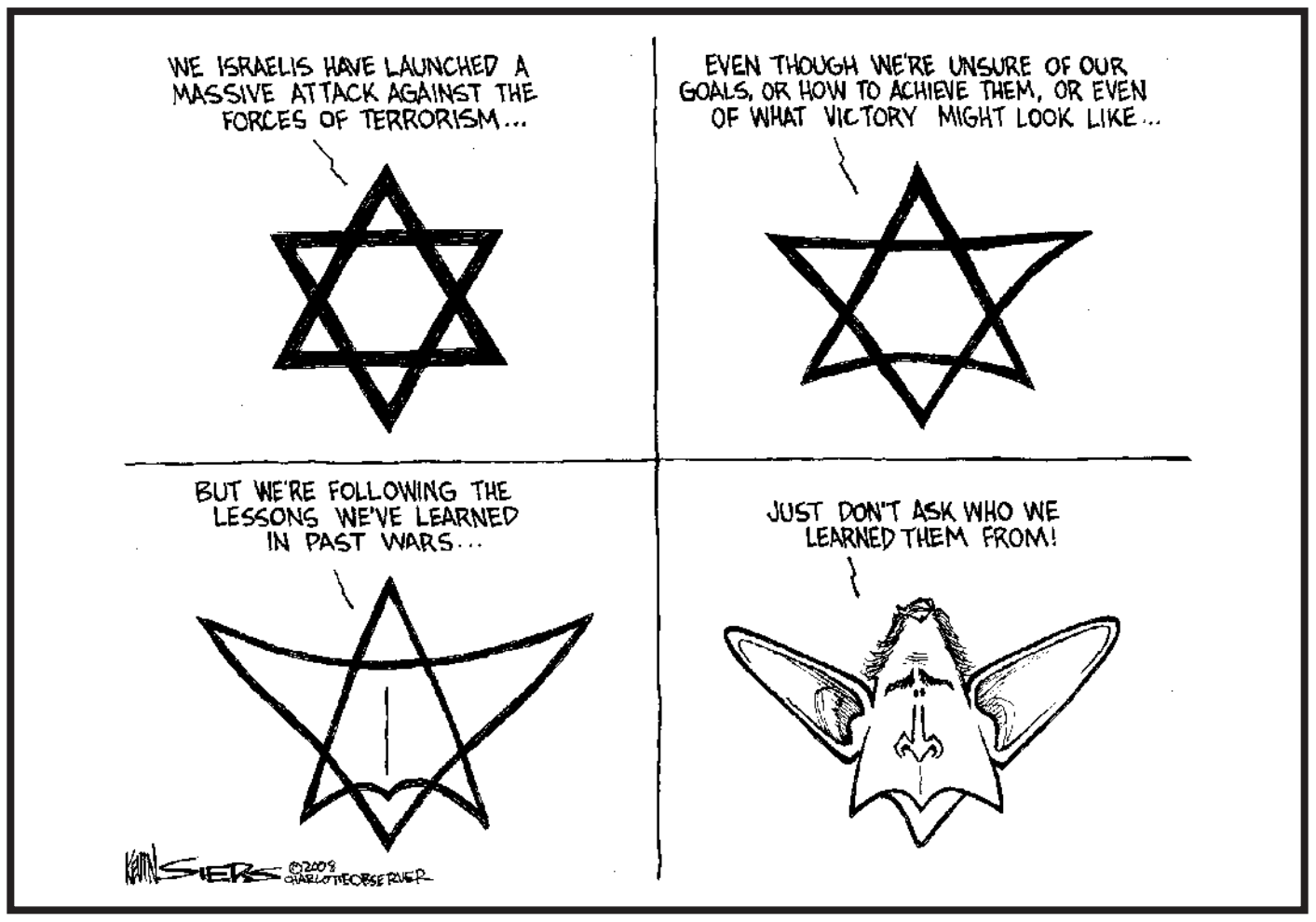
WE ISRAELIS HAVE LAUNCHED A MASSIVE ATTACK AGAINST THE FORCES OF TERRORISM...
EVEN THOUGH WE'RE UNSURE OF OUR GOALS, OR HOW TO ACHIEVE THEM, OR EVEN OF WHAT VICTORY MIGHT LOOK LIKE...
BUT WE'RE FOLLOWING THE LESSONS WE'VE LEARNED IN PAST WARS...
JUST DON'T ASK WHO WE LEARNED THEM FROM!
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Humble beginnings

By TOM ENGELHARDT
Special to the Los Angeles Times

Tom Engelhardt runs the Nation Institute's TomDispatch.com, where a longer version of this article, including a proposed inaugural address for Barack Obama, appears.

We consider ours a singular age of individual psychology and self-awareness. Isn't it strange, then, that our recent presidents have had nothing either modest or insightful to say about themselves in their first inaugural addresses, while our earliest presidents in their earliest moments spoke openly of their failings, limitations and deficiencies?

In fact, the very first inaugural address—George Washington's in New York City on April 30, 1789—began with a personal apology. In a fashion inconceivable in a country no longer known for acknowledging its faults, our first president apologized to Congress for his unworthiness, referring to himself as "one who (inheriting inferior endowments from nature and unpracticed in the duties of civil administration) ought to be peculiarly conscious of his own deficiencies."

This was the "father of our country" speaking, the former commander in chief of the Continental Army, who had steadfastly seen the American Revolution through to victory. And yet, having a strong sense of the limits of what one man could do as the head of a still modest-sized country, he began his presidency by raising doubts about himself.

Twelve years later, when Thomas Jefferson gave his inaugural address from the unfinished Capitol building in Washington, he took up similar themes. The principal author of the Declaration of Independence, the former governor of Virginia, the former secretary of State and vice president professed "a sincere consciousness that the task is above my talents, and that I approach it with those anxious and awful presentiments which the greatness of the charge and the weakness of my powers so justly inspire."

James Madison acknowledged his "deficiencies" in 1809. Eight years later, James Monroe insisted that "conscious of my own deficiency, I cannot enter on these duties without great anxiety for the result."

How curious and archaic such sentiments seem today, highlighting as they did humility and denigrating ability.

It's hard to imagine a recent president saying, as Jefferson did of the task ahead, "I shrink from the contemplation, and humble myself before the magnitude of the undertaking."

Today, all this would stink of weakness and so be taboo.

By the time John F. Kennedy came along, there was no more talk of shrinking from contemplation. "In the long history of the world," he said in his inaugural address, "only a few generations have been granted the role of defending freedom in its hour of maximum danger. I do not shrink from this responsibility—I welcome it."

Recent presidents have regularly outlined grand ambitions, celebrating strength, threatening enemies and hitting the call notes of an ever more imperial presidency. Underneath the often dull words of modern inaugurals lies a distinct hubris, an emphasis on the potential limitlessness of American power.

In his second inaugural address, George W. Bush, after raising the warning flag of "our vulnerability" and our need for security beyond compare, pledged nothing less than to bring "freedom" to the whole planet. He identified this as "the urgent requirement of our nation's security, and the calling of our time ... with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world."

Only one president in recent memory offered a shred of the modesty that the first presidents exhibited. Jimmy Carter's 1977 inaugural address, coming in the wake of Watergate, the Richard Nixon presidency and the disaster of Vietnam, called Americans to "a new spirit," a new way of thinking about the country, which was to include a recognition of "our recent mistakes" and a realization that "even our great nation has its recognized limits, and that we can neither answer all questions nor solve all problems."

Only Carter, of all our modern presidents, picked up on the theme of personal limits. "Your strength," he told Americans that January day in 1977, "can compensate for my weakness, and your wisdom can help to minimize my mistakes."

It didn't play well. After only one term, Carter was soundly thumped by Ronald Reagan, a candidate who saw no limits to America.

Looked at another way, Washington and Jefferson had an advantage over recent presidents. The country they were to lead was still an experiment that its creators knew could go wrong.

Our earliest presidents had the modesty of uncertain beginnings to guide them, just as we now have the immodesty of a government that garrisons much of the planet to guide us. They were called on to lead a new nation that was still militarily weak, whose capital, only 13 years after Jefferson doubted himself in public, would be sacked and burned by British troops. They were under oath to a country whose existence, recently wrested from the great imperial power of its day, was still a kind of fragile miracle.

We have just lived through a commander-in-chief presidency whose oppressive power and overwhelming hubris would undoubtedly have left those early presidents in shock, if not revolt. They would have seen Bush's world—in which strength was the byword of power and weakness an anathema—as the scion of European autocracy. These were, after all, men wary of armies and military power, who had sacrificed the very idea of executive strength to a tripartite form of government that would, they hoped, have the advantages of resiliency and responsibility. They recognized limits.

Let's hope that on Tuesday, in his first moments, Barack Obama will do the same and so sound a lot more like the president of these imperiled United States—and a lot less like the autocrat of the planet.

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Ten lessons for Obama, from Bush

By BOB WOODWARD
The Washington Post

Bob Woodward is an associate editor of The Washington Post *and the author of four books on President Bush,* Bush at War, Plan of Attack, State of Denial *and* The War Within*. Evelyn Duffy contributed to this article.*

There's actually a lot that President-elect Barack Obama can learn from the troubled presidency of George W. Bush. Over the past eight years, I have interviewed President Bush for nearly 11 hours, spent hundreds of hours with his administration's key players and reviewed thousands of pages of documents and notes. That produced four books, totaling 1,727 pages, that amount to a very long case study in presidential decision-making, and there are plenty of morals to the story. Presidents live in the unfinished business of their predecessors, and Bush casts a giant shadow on the Obama presidency: two incomplete wars and a monumental financial and economic crisis. Here are 10 lessons that Obama and his team should take away from the Bush experience.

1 Presidents set the tone. Don't be passive or tolerate virulent divisions.

In the fall of 2002, Bush personally witnessed a startling face-off between National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld in the White House Situation Room after Rumsfeld had briefed the National Security Council on the Iraq war plan. Rice wanted to hold on to a copy of the Pentagon briefing slides, code-named Polo Step. "You won't be needing that," Rumsfeld said, reaching across the table and snatching the Top Secret packet away from Rice—in front of the president. "I'll let you two work it out," Bush said, then turned and walked out. Rice had to send an aide to the Pentagon to get a bootlegged copy from the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Bush should never have put up with Rumsfeld's power play. Instead of a team of rivals, Bush wound up with a team of back-stabbers with long-running, poisonous disagreements about foreign policy fundamentals.

2 The president must insist that everyone speak out loud in front of the others, even—or especially—when there are vehement disagreements.

During the same critical period, Vice President Dick Cheney was urging Secretary of State Colin Powell to consider seriously the possibility that Iraq might be connected to the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Powell found the case worse than ridiculous and scornfully concluded that Cheney had what Powell termed a "fever." (In private, Powell used to call the Pentagon policy shop run by Undersecretary of Defense Douglas Feith, who shared Cheney's burning interest in supposed ties between al-Qaida and Iraq, a "Gestapo office.")

Powell was right that to conclude that Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden did not work together. But Cheney and Powell did not have this crucial debate in front of the president—even though such a discussion might have undermined one key reason for war. Cheney provided private advice to the president, but he was rarely asked to argue with others and test his case. After the invasion, Cheney had a celebratory dinner with some aides and friends. "Colin always had major reservations about what we were trying to do," Cheney told the group as they toasted Bush and laughed at Powell. This sort of derision undermined the administration's unity of purpose—and suggests the nasty tone that can emerge when open debate is stifled by long-running feuds and personal hostility.

3 A president must do the homework to master the fundamental ideas and concepts behind his policies.

The president should not micromanage, but understanding the ramifications of his positions cannot be outsourced to anyone.

For example, Gen. George W. Casey Jr., the commander of the U.S. forces in Iraq in 2004-07, concluded that President Bush lacked a basic grasp of what the Iraq war was about. Casey believed that Bush, who kept asking for enemy body counts, saw the war as a conventional battle, rather than the counterinsurgency campaign to win over the Iraqi population that it was. "We cannot kill our way to victory in Iraq," Gen. David Petraeus said later. In May 2008, Bush insisted to me that he, of all people, knew all too well what the war was about.

4 Presidents need to draw people out and make sure bad news makes it to the Oval Office.

On June 18, 2003, before real trouble had developed in Iraq, retired Army Lt. Gen. Jay Garner, the first official to head the Iraqi reconstruction effort, warned Rumsfeld that disbanding the Iraqi army and purging too many former Baath Party loyalists had been "tragic" mistakes. But in an Oval Office meeting with Bush later that day, none of this came up, and Garner reported to a pleased president that, in 70 meetings with Iraqis, they had always said, "God bless Mr. George Bush." Bush should have asked Garner if he had any worries—perhaps even kicking Rumsfeld out of the Oval Office and saying something like, "Jay, you were there. I insist on the ground truth. Don't hold anything back."

Bush sometimes assumed he knew his aides' private views without asking them one-on-one. He made probably the most important decision of his presidency—whether to invade Iraq—without directly asking Powell, Rumsfeld or CIA Director George Tenet for their bottom-line recommendation. (Instead of consulting his own father, former president George H.W. Bush, who had gone to war in 1991 to kick the Iraqi army out of Kuwait, the younger Bush told me that he had appealed to a "higher father" for strength.)

5 Presidents need to foster a culture of skepticism and doubt.

During a December 2003 interview with Bush, I read to him a quote from his closest ally, British Prime Minister Tony Blair, about the experience of receiving letters from family members of slain soldiers who had written that they hated him. "And don't believe anyone who tells you when they receive letters like that, they don't suffer any doubt," Blair had said.

"Yeah," Bush replied. "I haven't suffered doubt."

"Is that right?" I asked. "Not at all?"

"No," he said.

Presidents and generals don't have to live on doubt. But they should learn to love it. "You should not be the parrot on the secretary's shoulder," said Marine Gen. James Jones, Obama's incoming national security adviser, to his old friend Gen. Peter Pace, who was then the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff—a group Jones thought had been "systematically emasculated by Rumsfeld." Doubt is not the enemy of good policy; it can help leaders evaluate alternatives, handle big decisions and later make course corrections if necessary.

After 9/11, Bush spoke forthrightly about a war on terror that might last a generation and include other attacks on the U.S. homeland. That straight talk marked the period of Bush's greatest leadership and highest popularity. Presidents are strong when they are the voice of realism.

6 Presidents get contradictory data, and they need a rigorous way to sort it out.

In 2004-06, the CIA was reporting that Iraq was getting more violent and less stable. By mid-2006, Bush's own NSC deputy for Iraq, Meghan O'Sullivan, had a blunt assessment of conditions in Baghdad: "It's hell, Mr. President." But the Pentagon remained optimistic and reported that a strategy of drawing down U.S. troops and turning security over to the Iraqis would end in "self-reliance" in 2009. As best I could discover, the president never insisted that the contradiction between "hell" and "self-reliance" be resolved.

7 Presidents must tell the hard truth to the public, even if that means delivering very bad news.

For years after the Iraq invasion, Bush consistently offered upbeat public assessments. That went well beyond the infamous "Mission Accomplished" banner that he admitted last Monday had been a mistake. "Absolutely, we're winning," the president said during an October 2006 news conference. "We're winning." His confident remarks came during one of the lowest points of the war, at a time when anyone with a TV screen knew that the war was going badly. On Feb. 5, 2005, as he was moving up from his first-term role as Rice's deputy to become national security adviser, Stephen Hadley had offered a private, confidential assessment of the problems of Bush's Iraq-dominated first term. "I give us a B-minus for policy development," he said, "and a D-minus for policy execution." The president later told me that he knew that the Iraq "strategy wasn't working." So how could the United States be winning a war with a failing strategy?

After 9/11, Bush spoke forthrightly about a war on terror that might last a generation and include other attacks on the U.S. homeland. That straight talk marked the period of Bush's greatest leadership and highest popularity. Presidents are strong when they are the voice of realism.

8 Righteous motives are not enough for effective policy.

"I believe we have a duty to free people," Bush told me in late 2003. I believe he truly wanted to bring democracy to Afghanistan and Iraq. In preparing his second inaugural address in 2005, for example, Bush told his chief speechwriter, Michael Gerson, "The future of America and the security of America depends on the spread of liberty." That got the idealistic Gerson so pumped that he set out to produce the foreign policy equivalent to Albert Einstein's unified field theory of the universe—a 17-minute inaugural address in which the president said his goal was nothing less than "the ending of tyranny in our world."

But this high purpose often blinded Bush and his aides to the consequences of this mad dash to democracy. In 2005, for example, Bush and his war cabinet spent much of their time promoting free elections in Iraq—which wound up highlighting the isolation of the minority Sunnis and setting the stage for the raging sectarian violence of 2006.

9 Presidents must insist on strategic thinking.

Only the president (and perhaps the national security adviser) can prod a reactive bureaucracy to think about where the administration should be in one, two or four years. Then detailed, step-by-step tactical plans must be devised to try to get there. It's easy for an administration to become consumed with putting out brush fires, which often requires presidential involvement. (Ask Obama how much time he's been spending on the Gaza war.) But a president will probably be judged by the success of his long-range plans, not his daily crisis management.

For example, in the Afghanistan and Iraq wars, the quality of the planning for combat operations ranged from adequate to strong, but far too little attention was devoted to what might come after the fall of the Taliban and the Baath Party. Some critical strategic decisions—to disband the Iraqi army, force Baathists out of government and abolish an initial Iraqi government council—were made on the ground in Iraq, without the involvement of the NSC and the president.

Obama would do well to remember the example of a young Democratic president who was willing to make long-range plans. Bill Clinton began his presidency in 1993 after having promised to cut the federal deficit in half in four years. The initial plan looked shaky, and Clinton took a lot of heat for more than a year. But he and his team stuck to their basic strategy of cutting federal spending and raising taxes, which laid a major part of the foundation of the economic boom of the Clinton era. It was classic strategic planning, showing a willingness to pay a short-term price for the sort of long-term gains that go down in the history books.

10 The president should embrace transparency.

Some version of the behind-the-scenes story of what happened in his White House will always make it out to the public—and everyone will be better off if that version is as accurate as possible.

On March 8, 2008, Hadley made an extraordinary remark about how difficult it has proven to understand the real way Bush made decisions. "He will talk with great authority and assertiveness," Hadley said. " `This is what we're going to do.' And he won't mean it. Because he will not have gone through the considered process where he finally is prepared to say, `I've decided.' And if you write all those things down and historians get them, (they) say, `Well, he decided on this day to do such and such.' It's not true. It's not history. It's a fact, but it's a misleading fact."

Presidents should beware of such "misleading facts." They should run an internal, candid process of debate and discussion with key advisers that will make sense when it surfaces later. This sort of inside account will be told, at least in part, during the presidency. But the best obtainable version will emerge more slowly, over time, and become history.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲87° ▼78°	▲87° ▼78°	▲87° ▼78°	▲87° ▼78°	▲87° ▼78°

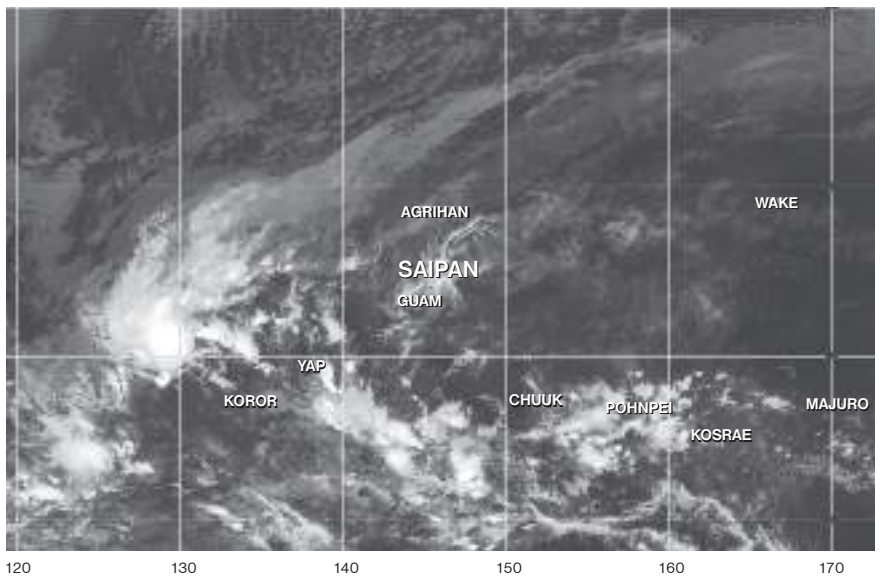
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Mostly Sunny	▲85	▼76
Palau	Mostly Cloudy	▲87	▼77
Yap	Showers	▲86	▼77
Chuuk	Rain	▲89	▼77
Pohnpei	Rain	▲83	▼78
Kosrae	Showers	▲85	▼79
Majuro	Rain	▲82	▼76

Around The Globe

Auckland	Sunny	▲72	▼60
Beijing	Cloudy	▲37	▼18
Hong Kong	Sunny	▲76	▼63
Honolulu	Partly Sunny	▲74	▼64
London	Showers	▲45	▼41
Los Angeles	Mostly Sunny	▲80	▼48
Manila	Cloudy	▲79	▼72
Melbourne	Mostly Sunny	▲70	▼54
Miami	Showers	▲70	▼56
New York	Partly Sunny	▲22	▼17
Osaka	Mostly Sunny	▲48	▼39
Paris	Rain	▲46	▼39
Pusan	Mostly Sunny	▲54	▼35
Rome	Sunny	▲55	▼38
Salem	Mostly Cloudy	▲51	▼30
San Francisco	Mostly Sunny	▲65	▼44
Seoul	Sunny	▲41	▼24
Tokyo	Mostly Sunny	▲50	▼37
Washington, DC	Partly Sunny	▲33	▼25

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00AM, FRIDAY, JAN. 16, 2009
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A cold front enters the discussion area at 25N175E and extends westward to near Minami Tori Shima at 22N155E then continues southwestward as a shear line through Agrihan at 18N146E to beyond 130E at 11N. Cloudiness and patchy rain are found along and up to 300 miles north and northwest of this boundary, aided by upper-level divergence. Scattered showers and a few thunderstorms are also seen at the western end of the shear line north of Koror within 65 miles of a line from 13N130E to 14N134E. A near-equatorial trough stretches eastward from a low-level circulation centered southwest of Koror near 6N128E to south of Yap at 5N140 then turns southeastward to end at EQ150E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are occurring near the trough axis just north of Koror within 90 miles of a line from 8N130E to 10N136E and from east of Yap to southwest of Chuuk within 170 miles of a line from 9N141E to 3N150E. Trade-wind convergence is producing scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms south of Chuuk and Pohnpei south of a line from 6n150E to 6N162E. Scattered showers are also present over Kosrae but south of Kwajalein between 7N and the equator from 162E to 170E and south of Majuro within 140 miles of a line from 2N170E to 5N180.

Tides

Saipan Harbor

5:57AM Today	Low Tide:	0.5 Feet
12:19PM Today	High Tide:	1.9 Feet
7:23PM Today	Low Tide:	0.5 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:47 AM	6:07 PM
Sunday	6:47 AM	6:08 PM
Monday	6:47 AM	6:08 PM
Tuesday	6:47 AM	6:09 PM
Wednesday	6:47 AM	6:09 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	11:35 PM	11:05 AM
Sunday		11:44 AM
Monday	12:46 AM	12:24 PM
Tuesday	1:38 AM	1:07 PM
Wednesday	2:30 AM	1:53 PM

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  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

HOW TO SUBMIT

- E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com or jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com.
- Fax: (670) 235-3740
- Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
- Drop off: 2nd Floor, CIC Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

POLICY

- The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to accept or reject a contribution for publication; the right to edit all contributions, the date of publication, size of the picture, and page placement; and the right to publish contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats.
- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

CUSTOMER SERVICE For inquiries, purchase of back issues and complaints, call (670) 235-8747, 235-2440, fax 235-3740.

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ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 1, 2009

DEPARTURES

Saipan-Rota			
CO9597	11:50am	12:25pm	1,7
Saipan-Guam			
CO9317	5:00am	5:50am	Daily
CO9313	8:30am	9:20am	Daily
CO9597	11:50am	1:20pm	1,7 via Rota
CO9601	12:30pm	1:20pm	2,3,4,5,6
CO9603	3:30pm	4:20pm	Daily
CO9605	6:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
CO9599	9:30pm	10:20pm	Daily
Saipan-Narita			
NW 099	5:00am	7:35am	Daily
NW 078	8:20am	1:30pm	2,3,4,5,6,7
NW 075	4:55pm	7:30pm	Daily
Guam-Narita			
NW 73	4:10pm	7:00pm	Daily
NW 81	3:55pm	6:55pm	Daily
Saipan-Osaka			
OZ 119	4:00am	6:40am	1,4,6
NW 083	4:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
Guam-Osaka			
NW 79	4:45pm	7:35pm	Daily
Saipan-Nagoya			
NW 078	8:20am	11:05am	Daily
Guam-Nagoya			
NW 23	4:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
Saipan-Incheon			
OZ 604	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ 604	2:40am	6:30am	2,3,4,5,6,7
OZ 119	4:00am	11:25am	1,4,6 via Osaka
OZ 606	3:20pm	7:00pm	Daily
Saipan-Busan			
OZ 608	3:20am	6:50am	1,4,5,7
Saipan-Shanghai			
FM 844	2:50am	5:40am	2,6
Rota-Guam			
CO 9597	12:50pm	1:20pm	1,7
Guam-Palau			
CO 953	7:40pm	8:40pm	1,7
CO 893	5:50pm	6:50pm	3,5
Palau-Manila			
CO 893	7:35pm	9:10pm	3,5
Guam-Manila			
CO 893	5:50pm	9:10pm	3,5 via Koror
CO 933	8:00pm	9:40pm	Daily
PR 111	6:00am	7:50am	1,2,4,6,7
Nagoya-Manila			
NW 71	8:40pm	11:55pm	Daily
Incheon-Hongkong			
OZ 721	9:20am	12:00pm	Daily
OZ 723	7:45pm	10:35pm	Daily
OZ 7173	8:00pm	10:50pm	5,7
Narita-Manila			
NW 1	7:00pm	10:55pm	Daily

ARRIVALS

Rota-Saipan			
CO 9598	3:25am	4:00am	5,6
Guam-Saipan			
CO 9316	2:30am	3:20am	1,2,3,4,7
CO9598	2:30am	4:00am	5,6 via Rota
CO9596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
CO9600	10:20am	11:10am	Daily
CO9602	2:00pm	2:50pm	Daily
CO9604	5:00pm	5:50pm	Daily
CO9606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily
Narita-Saipan			
NW 076	10:15am	2:40pm	Daily
NW 077	6:25pm	1:20am+1	2,3,4,5,6,7
NW 100	8:45pm	1:10am+1	Daily
Narita-Guam			
NW 74	9:45am	2:20pm	Daily
NW 82	10:30am	3:10pm	Daily
Osaka-Saipan			
OZ 120	9:50pm	2:20am+1	3,5,7
NW 084	10:40am	3:05pm	Daily
Osaka-Guam			
NW 80	10:30am	3:00pm	Daily
Nagoya-Saipan			
NW 077	9:00pm	1:20am+1	Daily
Nagoya-Guam			
NW 24	10:00am	2:30pm	Daily
Incheon-Saipan			
OZ 605	9:00am	2:20pm	Daily
OZ 603	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ 120	7:10pm	2:20am+1	3,5,7 via Osaka
OZ 603	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1,2,3,4,5,6
Busan-Saipan			
OZ 607	9:00pm	2:10am+1	3,4,6,7
Shanghai-Saipan			
FM 843	7:15pm	1:50am+1	1,5
Guam-Rota			
CO 9598	2:30am	3:00am	5,6
Palau-Guam			
CO 954	2:30am	5:25am	1,2
CO 892	2:35am	5:30am	4,6
Manila-Palau			
CO 892	10:10pm	1:50am+1	3,5
Manila-Guam			
CO 892	10:10pm	5:30am+1	3,5 via Koror
CO 934	11:10pm	4:40am+1	Daily
PR 110	10:10pm	4:00am+1	1,3,5,6,7
Manila-Nagoya			
NW 72	6:30am	11:05am	Daily
Hongkong-Incheon			
OZ 724	12:30am	4:50am	Daily
OZ 7183	12:45am	5:05am	1,4,6
OZ 722	1:30pm	5:45pm	Daily
Manila-Narita			
NW 2	7:45am	12:40pm	Daily

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; FM: Shanghai Airlines; PR: Philippine Airlines; NW: Northwest; OZ: Asiana
ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

Schedule of Religious Services

CATHOLIC

Mt. Carmel Cathedral
Sunday Mass: 6am, 9am, 11am and 6pm
Monday-Saturday: 6am
Wednesday: 6am and 6pm

Korean Center
Sunday: 10:30am
Wednesday: 10am
Thursday-Friday: 8pm
Saturday: 3pm and 7:30pm

Kristo Rai Parish
Sunday Mass: 6am, 8am and 9:30am
Monday- Saturday: 6am
Wednesday: 6am and 6pm
Saturday: 6am and 6pm

Nuestra Senora De Soledad Parish
Wednesday Mass: 6pm
First Friday Healing Mass: 6pm
Saturday Mass: 6pm
Sunday Masses: 7:30am & 9am

Saint Jude Parish
Sunday: 6am, 8am, 10am
Wednesday and Thursday: 6pm

San Antonio Parish
Sunday: 6am and 8am
Tuesday and Friday: 6pm

San Francisco de Borja-Rota
Sunday: 6am and 8am
Monday-Saturday: 6am
Wednesday: 6pm

San Isidro-Rota
Sunday: 5am and 10am
Monday-Wednesday: 7pm
Thursday-Saturday: 5am and 7pm

San Jose (Oleai) Parish
Sunday: 6am and 7:30am
Tuesday-Wednesday and Friday-Saturday: 6pm

San Roque Parish
Sunday: 9am
Wednesday: 6pm
Saturday: 10:30am

San Vicente Parish
Sunday: 6am, 9am and 6pm
Monday-Saturday: 6pm

Santa Remedios
Sunday: 7:30am
Tuesday: 6pm
Saturday: 10am-Baptism

Santa Soledad
Sunday: 7:30am

PROTESTANT

Born Again Christian (Upper Room Int'l Ministries), Saipan
Wednesday Prayer and Healing Night: 8-10:30pm
Saturday Tagalog Service: 8-10:30pm
Sunday English Service: 9:30-11am
Sunday School for Children: 10-11am
Sunday Filipino Service: 7-9pm

Calvary Baptist Church, Saipan
Sunday School: 9am
Sunday Morning Worship: 10am
Sunday Evening Worship: 6pm
Wednesday Prayer Service: 7pm

Chinese Christian Church of Saipan
Worship Services: Sunday, 10am and 7:30pm
Bible Study: Tuesday-Friday, 9:25pm

Cornerstone Christian Church, Saipan
Worship/Study Opportunities
Adult Sunday School: 9am
Youth Sunday School: 9am
English Worship Service Sunday: 10am
Sunday Service: 5:30pm
Worship/Fellowship Sunday: 9:30pm
Evangelism/Follow-up: Sunday/Monday: 1:30/7:30pm
Worship Team: Monday/Saturday-9pm;
Cell Groups Tuesday: 7:30pm
Mid-week Service: 7:30pm
Prayer Meeting Wednesday: 7:30pm
Leader's Bible Study Friday: 7:30 pm
Cornerstone School of Ministry Saturday: 7:30pm

Episcopal/Anglican Church on Saipan
St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Worship Service Sunday: Holy Communion 9:00am
Place: Vicarage, Chalan Laulau,
Call 235-0545 for directions

Grace Christian Assembly, Saipan
Worship Service: 9am
GBI Classes: 4-6pm
Prayer Meeting: Monday-Saturday: 6am
Sunday: 7am
Home Cell Bible Study: Wednesday-Friday: 7pm
Youth Service: Friday: 5:30pm

Iglesia Ni Cristo, Saipan
Wednesday: 7:45pm (Tagalog)
Thursday: 5:30am (English); 7:45 pm (English)
Saturday: 7:45pm (Tagalog)
Sunday: 6:45am (English)
Children Worship Service: Sunday, 9am (English)

Immanuel United Methodist Church Koblerville
Sunday Services
9:00 AM
Place of the church-next to Mt. Carmel Cathedral on Chalan Kanoa Dr. • Tel: 322-6158
Pastor JJ Matsumoto

Immanuel Methodist Church (Filipino Congregation)
Sunday: 7:00am-Choir Rehearsal
8:00am-Church Service (Tagalog)
9:15am-Sunday School
Wednesday: 6:30pm, home group
8:00pm-Prayer Meeting
Thursday: 7:30pm-Choir Practice (Church)
Saturday: 8:00pm-Choir Practice (Parsonage)

Jesus is Lord Church, Saipan
English Service: 9-11am, Sunday
Tagalog Service: 6-8pm, Sunday

Korean Presbyterian Church, Saipan
Sunday School: 8:20am
Sunday Adult: 10am
Sunday Adult: 11:30am
Sunday Evening: 7:30pm
Wednesday: 8pm

Life in the Son Christian Fellowship, Saipan
Sunday Worship Service: 10am–12noon
Tuesday: Leadership Institute 7pm-10pm
Wednesday: Corporate prayer 7pm-8pm
Last Friday of the month-prayer: 7pm-11pm
Friday: Youth on Fire: 7pm-9pm
Tel. No. 235-LIFE (5433)

Marianas Baptist Church, Saipan
English Worship Service: 9-10:30am
Evening Worship Service: 6-7pm
Children Sunday School: 9-10:30am
Tagalog Sunday School: 11am-12pm
English Sunday School: 11am-12pm
Korean Worship Service: 11am-12pm
Wednesday Prayer Meeting:
English, 7pm-8pm
Korean: 8:30pm-9:30pm

Missions Connection Ministry
Every Sunday Celebrations:
10am (English), 6pm (Tagalog)
Wednesday Bible Study: 7pm
Youth Impact Friday: 7pm
Saturday Prayer Meeting: 7pm

Northern Marianas Christian Church
Sunday Worship Service 10am Fina Sisu Housing FS#1 (Child care will be provided)
Friday Services @ 7pm Fina Sisu FS#1 for more info pls. contact Ryan 484-2620

Saipan Bible Fellowship Church
Sunday School: 9:30-10am
Divine Worship: 10am-11:30am
Evening Service: 7pm-8:30pm
Wednesday Prayer Meeting: 8pm-9pm

Saipan Christian Church
Sunday: 7:30am-10am
Sunday: 6:30 pm -9pm
Monday: 8 pm -10pm (Prayer Meeting)
Thursday: 8pm-10pm (Cell Groups)

Saipan Church of Christ
Sunday Bible Class: 9am
Sunday Worship: 10am
Sunday Worship English: 6pm
Sunday Worship Tagalog: 7pm
Wednesday Bible Study: 7:30pm

Saipan Community Church
(Sunday Services)
Palau Service: 7:30am-9am
English Service: 10am-11:30am
Chuukese Service: 1pm-2:30pm
Filipino Service: 5:00pm-7:00pm

Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Saipan
(Saturday Church Services)
Sabbath School Program: 9-10am
Lesson Study: 10-10:40am
Divine Service: 11-12pm
Visitation: 3-4pm
Adventist Youth Program: 4:30-5:30pm
Sundown Worship: 6-7pm

First Baptist Church
(Formerly Saipan Baptist Church)
Afetna St., San Antonio

Sunday		
	9am	Sunday school
	10am	Regular worship
	6pm	worship
Wednesday		
	7pm	worship

Everyone is warmly welcome to attend our worship services. Transportation is readily available to anyone who needs a ride to our church. For further information, please call Pastor David M. Mclure at 234-1939/235-7779.

Thy Word Ministries Saipan Faith Center
Phone 234-0209
New Christian Charismatic Church Service located in Chalan Paio, Beach Road in the Sablan building on the 2nd floor above Subway Sandwiches.
Senior Pastors: George & Gail Kamakahi
Asst. Pastors: Eric & Penny Sakaguchi
Service Times
Sunday 10:00am Worship Service
Sunday 7pm Discipleship Classes
Tuesday 10:00am Bible Studies
Tuesday 6:00pm Intercessory Prayer
Tuesday 7:00pm Music Practice
Wednesday 7:00pm Mid-Week Service
Saturday 10:00am Evangelism

Upper Room International Ministries
Sunday 5:30am-6:30am Morning prayer

	7am-9am	English service
	7am-9am	Sunday school
	10am-12noon	English service, Koblerville
Wednesday	7pm-9pm	Prayer meeting
Saturday	7pm-9pm	Tagalog service

Venue: Jason Presbyterian Church
Gualo Rai, Saipan

Victory Chapel Christian Fellowship Church
Sunday School: 9:30am
Sunday AM Worship:10:30am
Sunday PM Worship:7:00am
Wed Worship: 7:30pm
Prayer 45 min. Prior to Service Times
Morning Prayer: 6-8am M-S

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

January 17, 2000

Businesmen oppose new water testings
Businesses are up in arms against the planned chemical monitoring of all public water systems because of the huge cost it entails especially at this time when profits are down due to economic slowdown. Establishments in the CNMI may have to pay a minimum of $10,000 for each wellhead covering the three-year period (1999-2001) as part of the monitoring requirements of the Safe Drinking Water program put in place by the Division of Environmental Quality. The cost of analysis for one set of samples is approximately $2,700. But the baseline monitoring requirements are for four consecutive quarters. In a bid to stop DEQ from conducting such tests, businesses said they will form a coalition and collectively question before the court the legality of holding such chemical monitoring. "If they do not listen to our concern, we will file a lawsuit," said Man-Soo Song, president of Western Pacific Ent., Inc., whose company operates several commercial spaces for rent in Garapan.

US lawmaker vows to help NMI vs takeover
A visiting U.S. congressman has pledged his commitment to support efforts by the CNMI government to stave off federal takeover of local immigration, minimum wage and custom standards as he hailed "improved working conditions" on the island. Rep. George Radanovich (R-California), a member of the U.S. House Resources Committee and chairman of the Western Caucus, said the attempt to strip Commonwealth powers over these functions is a result of the fact that issues on the island have been caught up in the larger issue of labor movement in the mainland. This is "unfortunate", he said, but added the CNMI must ensure that reforms implemented in the past two years by the government continue to benefit the islanders.

January 17, 2001

Housing project faces further delay
The Koblerville housing project faces further delay after the Senate insisted on amending a $2.4 million House appropriation to install sewer, power and water as well as road infrastructure to complete the infrastructure project. Northern Marianas Housing Corporation Executive Director Marylou S. Ada lobbied strongly in the leadership meeting to the Senators for them to immediately act on the measure so that the contractors can begin work on the expansion project. In a 6-1 vote, the Senate passed HB 12-301 but inserted a provision which commits $1 million in interest expected to be earned from the $60 million bond flotation of the Commonwealth Development Authority will be divided equally to fund Capital Improvement Projects on Rota and Tinian.

$3.4M loan for Kobler project okayed
The Northern Marianas Housing Corporation yesterday disclosed it will seal a $3.5 million loan agreement with the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank, which will be used as additional funding for the Koblerville expansion project on Saipan. The approved loan will be was closed today at the Commonwealth Development Authority. The loan funds would serve as interim financing for the 45 unit residential housing subdivision located at the southern part of Saipan. The housing project, which has 2-, 3- and 4- bedroom units, including three that are designed for people with disabilities, is anticipated to be completed in April 2001.

January 17, 2002

Prospects bright for Saipan casino
Despite a Constitutional ban on gambling, it will not be necessary to amend the CNMI Constitution to allow the establishment of a casino on Saipan since the language of the charter itself allows for exemptions. Senate legal counsel Tony Cabrera pointed this out, in reaction to a recent report about a consortium of American, Japanese and Korean investors who are eyeing Saipan as a possible location for a proposed casino. "Although Article XXI of the CNMI Constitution expressly prohibits gambling, Section 1 stipulates that an exception may be made as long as it is provided by Commonwealth law or established through initiative in the Commonwealth or in any senatorial district," Cabrera said.

Business

Congress OKs release of final $350B bailout cash

WASHINGTON (AP)—Congress laid the foundation for President-elect Barack Obama's economic recovery plan on Thursday with remarkable speed, clearing the way for a new infusion of bailout cash for the financial industry while majority Democrats proposed spending increases and tax cuts totaling a whopping $825 billion. Two days after Obama personally lobbied for release of $350 billion in bailout funds, the Senate narrowly turned aside a bid to block the money.

Across the Capitol, Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif. said, "Immediate job creation and then continuing job creation" were the twin goals of the separate stimulus legislation. It recommends tax cuts for businesses and individuals while pouring billions into areas such as health care, education, energy and highway construction.

She and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., have pledged to have the economic stimulus bill ready for Obama's signature by mid-February.

Both houses debated Obama's call to release another $350 billion from the financial bailout package, but the Senate vote was the triumph he had sought. Despite bipartisan anger over the Bush administration's handling of the program to date, Democratic allies of the incoming president prevailed on a 52-42 roll call.

The vote followed a commitment by Obama to use as much as $100 billion of the funds to help homeowners facing foreclosure proceedings.

The money will be available in less than two weeks, at a time when there is fresh evidence of shakiness among banks.

The 44th president-to-be was at his transition office across town from the Capitol—and President Bush relegated to the role of virtual onlooker—as events played out at the dawn of a new Democratic era in government.

Obama has called for swift and bold action to confront an economic debacle unrivaled since the Great Depression.

The president-elect, who travels to hardhit Ohio on Friday to promote his economic program, also announced he would convene a "fiscal responsibility summit" in February to focus on long-term problems with the economy and the skyrocketing costs of benefit programs such as Social Security and Medicare. "We've kicked this can down the road and now we are at the end of the road," he said in a Washington Post interview posted on the newspaper's Web site.

House Democrats propose $825 billion stimulus bill

WASHINGTON (AP)—House Democrats unveiled an $825 billion economic recovery bill Thursday, unprecedented in its scale and reach, that would provide an enormous infusion of public spending in hopes of kick-starting the sagging economy.

The legislation—two-thirds spending and one-third tax cuts—would provide help for the poor and unemployed and hand out huge grants for local schools and state governments, among its many provisions.

President-elect Barack Obama said it would fulfill his promise of creating or preserving more than 3 million jobs. But Republicans calculated that would equal as much as $275,000 per job.

Virtually everyone living in the United States would be affected by the plan. A $500 tax cut would reach 95 percent of workers and $1,000 for working couples. First-time home buyers purchasing homes between Jan. 1 and June 30 would get a $7,500 tax credit, and local school districts would be spared severe cuts as state and local governments budgets collapse—to the tune of $120 billion over the next two years. States would get $87 billion worth of help with their Medicaid budgets over the next two years. But there's also money for fresh sod for the National Mall and millions of $40 coupons to help people adapt their old televisions for digital signals, raising questions about how efficient the legislation would be in creating jobs. Even bill drafters such as Appropriations Committee Chairman David Obey, D-Wis., admits that much of the money won't flow into the economy immediately.

And Obey says more may be required.

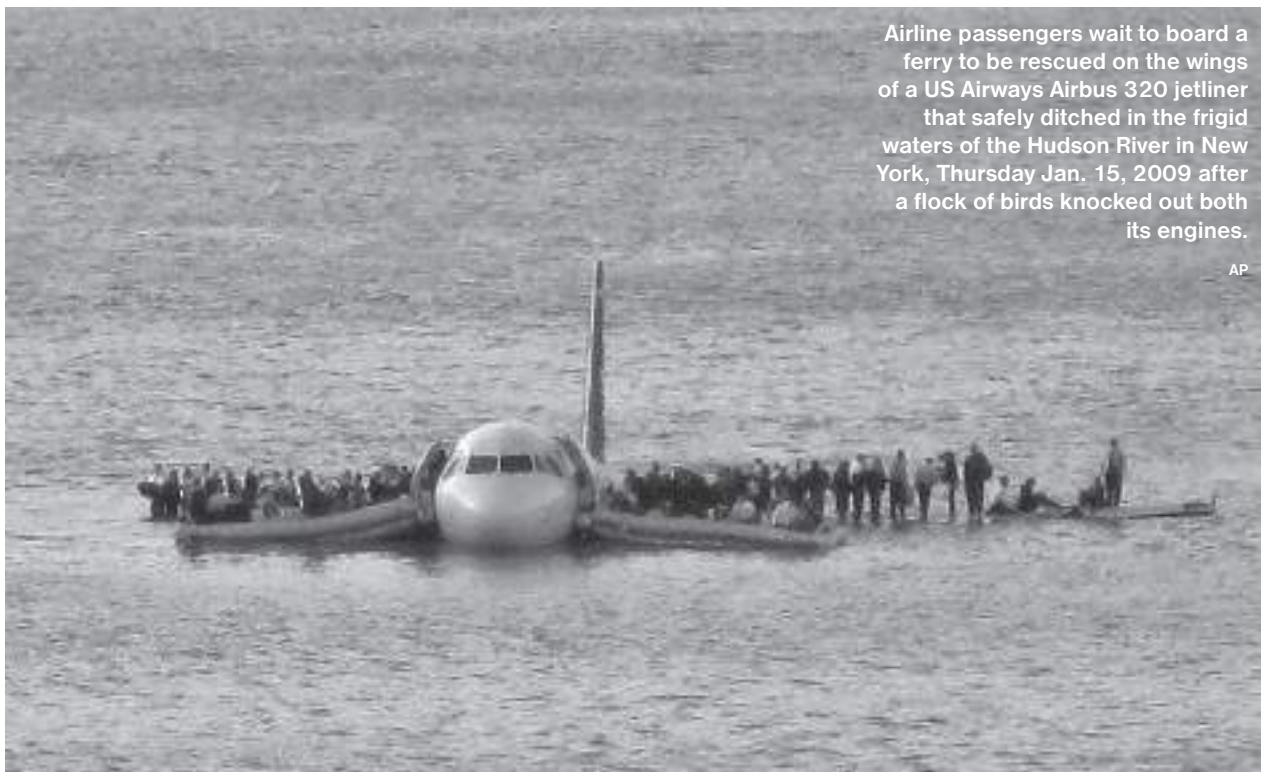
"This product may in fact undershoot the mark," Obey told reporters.

Whatever doubts there may be about how effective the plan would be, it's on a fast track through Congress in hopes of reaching Obama's desk within a month.

"It is about job creation," House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., said. "It is about clean, efficient energy in America to transform our economy through investments in science and technology. ... It is about modernizing our roads, bridges; education for the 21st century; tax cuts that make work pay and create jobs."

Nation

All 155 survive as pilot ditches plane in Hudson



Airline passengers wait to board a ferry to be rescued on the wings of a US Airways Airbus 320 jetliner that safely ditched in the frigid waters of the Hudson River in New York, Thursday Jan. 15, 2009 after a flock of birds knocked out both its engines.

AP

NEW YORK (AP)—A cool-headed pilot maneuvered his crippled jetliner over New York City and ditched it in the frigid Hudson River on Thursday, and all 155 on board were pulled to safety as the plane slowly sank. It was, the governor said, "a miracle on the Hudson."

One victim suffered two broken legs, a paramedic said, but there were no other reports of serious injuries.

US Airways Flight 1549, an Airbus A320 bound for Charlotte, N.C., struck a flock of birds just after takeoff minutes earlier at LaGuardia Airport, apparently disabling the engines.

The pilot, identified as Chesley B. "Sully" Sullenberger III of Danville, Calif., "was phenomenal," passenger Joe Hart said. "He landed it—I tell you what, the impact wasn't a whole lot more than a rear-end (collision). It threw you into the seat ahead of you.

"Both engines cut out and he actually floated it into the river," he said.

In a city still wounded from the aerial attack on the World Trade Center, authorities were quick to assure the public that terrorism wasn't involved.

The plane was submerged up to its windows in the river by the time rescuers arrived, including Coast Guard vessels and commuter ferries that happened to be nearby. Some passengers waded in water up to their knees, standing on the wing of the plane and waiting for help.

Helen Rodriguez, a paramedic who was among the first to arrive at the scene, said she saw one woman with two broken legs. Fire officials said others were evaluated for hypothermia, bruises and other minor injuries. An infant was on board and appeared to be fine, Mayor Michael Bloomberg said.

"We had a miracle on 34th Street. I believe now we have had a miracle on the Hudson," Gov. David Paterson said.

The crash took place on a 20-degree day, one of the coldest of the season in New York. The Coast Guard said the water temperature was 36 degrees.

Dave Sanderson, who was flying home to Charlotte after a business trip, said the sound of an explosion was followed by passengers running up the aisle and people being shoved out of the way.

As the plane descended, passenger Vallie Collins tapped out a text message to her husband, Steve: "My plane is crashing." He was desperately trying to figure out whether she had been on the downed plane when the message arrived.

Another passenger, Jeff Kolodjay, said people put their heads in their laps and prayed. He said the captain instructed them to "brace for impact because we're going down."

"It was intense. It was intense. You've got to give it to the pilot. He made a hell of a landing," Kolodjay said.

Witnesses said the pilot appeared to guide the plane down. Barbara Sambriski, a researcher at The Associated Press, watched the water landing from the news organization's high-rise office. "I just thought, 'Why is it so low?' And, splash, it hit the water," she said.

As water slowly filled the cabin, Sanderson said he and another passenger helped people out onto the wing. One woman had a 3-year-old child, he said, and safely tossed the toddler onto a raft before climbing on herself.

Hudson River landing hero is an ex-Air Force fighter pilot

NEW YORK (AP)—The pilot who guided a crippled US Airways jetliner safely into the Hudson River—saving all 155 people aboard—became an instant hero Thursday, with accolades from the mayor and governor and a fan club online.

The pilot of Flight 1549 was Chesley B. "Sully" Sullenberger III, 57, of Danville, Calif., an official familiar with the accident told The Associated Press. Sullenberger is a former fighter pilot who runs a safety consulting firm in addition to flying commercial aircraft.

Sullenberger, who has flown for US Airways since 1980, flew F-4 fighter jets with the Air Force in the 1970s. He then served on a board that investigated aircraft accidents and participated later in several National Transportation Safety Board investigations.

He is president of Safety Reliability Methods, a California firm that uses "the ultra-safe world of commercial aviation" as a basis for safety consulting in other fields, according to the firm's Web site.

Sullenberger's mailbox at the firm was full on Thursday. A group of fans sprang up on Facebook within hours of the emergency landing.

"OMG, I am terrified of flying but I would be happy to be a passenger on one of your aircraft!!" Melanie Wills in Bristol wrote on the wall of "Fans of Sully Sullenberger." "You have saved a lot of peoples lives and are a true hero!!"

The pilot "did a masterful job of landing the plane in the river and then making sure that everybody got out," Mayor Michael Bloomberg said. "He walked the plane twice after everybody else was off, and tried to verify that there was nobody else on board, and he assures us there was not."

"He was the last one up the aisle and he made sure that there was nobody behind him."

Bush to defend his tenure in farewell address

WASHINGTON (AP)—Reflecting on two tumultuous terms in the White House, President George W. Bush defended his tenure in a farewell address Thursday, arguing that he followed his conscience and always acted in the best interests of the nation. "You may not agree with some tough decisions I have made, but I hope you can agree that I was willing to make the tough decisions," Bush said, according to excerpts of his prime-time speech released in advance by the White House.

Bush

A bookend to eight years indelibly marked by terrorism, two wars, recessions and a push for democracy, the speech offered Bush one last chance before he leaves office Tuesday to defend his presidency and craft a first draft of his legacy for historians. He is scheduled to deliver the speech from the White House East Room, with just 112 hours left in his presidency.

Bush is spending his last weekend as president at Camp David. The speech is his final public appearance until he greets President-elect Barack Obama on Inauguration Day at the White House's North Portico.

Bush called the inauguration of Obama, the first black president, a "moment of hope and pride" for America.

"Standing on the steps of the Capitol will be a man whose story reflects the enduring promise of our land," he said in wishing the best to Obama, incoming first lady Michelle Obama, and their two daughters.

Bush's presidency began with the worst terrorist attack on U.S. soil and ends with the worst economic collapse in three generations.

Pentagon: Iraq withdrawal has 16-month time frame

WASHINGTON (AP)—Pentagon officials said Thursday they will be ready on Inauguration Day with plans for a quick pullout of U.S. combat troops from Iraq if Barack Obama orders one, as he pledged to do during his White House campaign.

A 16-month timeline for withdrawal of battle forces from Iraq is among options being prepared, with an eye to Obama's pledge to call the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the White House on his first day in office with instructions to close down a war he opposed.

"Our military planners do not live in a vacuum," Pentagon spokesman Geoff Morrell said. "They are well aware that the president-elect campaigned on withdrawing (combat) troops from Iraq on a 16-month timeline, so it would be only prudent of them to draw up plans that reflected that option."

The 16-month option, which would represent a speedier withdrawal of battle troops from Iraq than defense officials preferred, would be among a range of plans presented to Obama whenever he asks, Morrell said. Since that request could come as early as the afternoon of Inauguration Day on Tuesday, the plans will be ready then, Morrell said.

ACROSS THE NATION

4 kids badly burned by sulfuric acid in Texas

GAINESVILLE, Texas (AP)—A woman accused of child endangerment after her four children were doused with sulfuric acid said she was the intended target for the caustic material, Cooke County Sheriff Michael Compton said Thursday. Compton said Cynthia Darlene Stout, 43, told authorities that her boyfriend was trying to throw the substance on her during an argument in their pickup truck and that it hit the children instead. Compton said that they are preparing charges against the man, who has not yet been arrested. Stout was arrested Wednesday on a charge of child endangerment after three of her children, ages 14, 7 and 4, were badly burned by the acid. Compton said Stout tried to walk away from the truck near a cafe in Woodbine while the man took the 18-month-old to a nearby residence where a woman washed down the infant with water.

Immigration officials end RI detention contract

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (AP)—Federal immigration officials said Thursday that guards at a privately run detention facility dragged a detainee dying of cancer screaming down the hall, even though he had a doctor's note authorizing the use of a wheelchair. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement pulled all 153 of its immigration detainees out of the Donald W. Wyatt Detention Facility in Central Falls last month as it investigated the August death of Hiu Lui "Jason" Ng, a 34-year-old Chinese immigrant. On Thursday, the agency notified Wyatt officials that it would terminate its contract with the jail and permanently stop sending detainees there. ICE spokeswoman Kelly Nantel said the agency concluded its investigation Monday into the death of Ng, a computer engineer who had settled in Queens, N.Y., and was at the facility for allegedly overstaying a visa.

$50 million promised to soften border fence impact

McALLEN, Texas (AP)—The Department of Homeland Security will allocate as much as $50 million to mitigate the environmental impact of the U.S.-Mexico border fence ordered by the Bush administration. The agency signed an agreement Wednesday with the Department of the Interior to set aside funds for projects that the Interior department determines will soften the environmental damage caused by the fence. "Today's signing of this memorandum of agreement demonstrates that our commitment is not only words, but actual resources, which have been set aside to allow DOI to mitigate the impact of our border security efforts in environmentally sensitive areas," Customs and Border Protection Commissioner W. Ralph Basham said in a statement released Thursday. The Department of Homeland Security includes Customs and Border Protection, which is overseeing the fence project. The Department of Interior must give DHS its list of proposals by June 1.

Asia

Pakistan extends crackdown on Mumbai suspects

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (AP)—Pakistan insisted it would help India to bring those behind the Mumbai terrorist attacks to justice, saying Thursday it had shut down extremist Web sites and suspected militant training camps, and detained 71 people in a deepening probe.

Still, a top Pakistani official said authorities needed to further investigate information about the attacks provided by archrival India before it could be used to prosecute suspects in court.

Islamabad is under pressure to clamp down on Lashkar-e-Taiba, the Pakistan-based militant group that India blames for killing 164 people in its commercial capital in the siege and raising tension between South Asia's nuclear-armed neighbors.

Days after the November attacks, the U.N. Security Council declared that Jamaat-ud-Dawa, a charity in Pakistan, was merely a front for the outlawed militant organization.

On Thursday, Pakistan's Interior Ministry said 71 leaders of the groups had been arrested since then and that another 124 had been placed under surveillance and must register their every move with police.

"The restrictions are so tough. It's virtual detention," Interior Secretary Kamal Shah said.

Rehman Malik, the ministry's top official, said authorities also had closed 20 offices, 94 schools, two libraries and six Web sites linked to the charity. He said authorities had shut more than a dozen relief camps of the charity, some of which are alleged to be militant training grounds.

Among those detained was Hafiz Mohammed Saeed, the head of Jamaat-ud-Dawa, along with Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi and Zarrar Shah, who India says planned the Mumbai attacks.

Malik repeated Islamabad's call for a joint investigation into the attacks and urged India to hand over more information to assist Pakistan's own probe.

AP

Pakistan's Interior Minister Rehman Malik addresses a news conference in Islamabad, Pakistan, on Thursday, Jan. 15, 2009.

Report: NKorea's Kim taps 3rd son as successor

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korean leader Kim Jong Il has named his youngest son to succeed him as head of the Stalinist nation, a South Korean news agency report said Thursday.

But another report said his eldest son was poised to step in as a figurehead, reflecting uncertainty over who will succeed Kim, who turns 67 next month.

Rumors have swirled for years that Kim would nominate one of his three sons as a successor, following the tradition begun when he inherited the leadership from his father, North Korea's founder Kim Il Sung.

Reports that Kim Jong Il suffered a stroke in mid-August heightened speculation about a successor.

Kim will hand leadership over to Swiss-educated Kim Jong Un, who is in his mid-20s, South Korea's Yonhap news agency said, citing an unidentified intelligence source. The powerful Workers' Party was informed about a week ago, the report said.

Jong Un was born to Kim Jong Il's late wife Ko Yong Hi. Ko had another son, Kim Jong Chol, but the father reportedly doesn't favor the middle son as a possible leader.

The National Intelligence Service, Seoul's top spy agency, said it could not confirm the report. Cheong Seong-chang, a North Korea specialist at the independent Sejong Institute, said the reported choice of Jong Un seemed to be a feasible scenario.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Report: China's wild camels increasing

GUANGZHOU, China (AP)—The number of wild camels—rugged creatures living in a former nuclear test zone with increasingly scarce water—in China's western Xinjiang territory has grown to about 500, making up about half of the world's population of the animals, state-run media reported Friday. Scientists estimated that in the 1990s, only about 400 wild Bactrian camels were living in a national nature reserve in Xinjiang's Lop Nur region, while another 400 or so were in Mongolia, the state-run news Web site Tianshannet.com.cn quoted camel expert Yuan Lei as saying. Yuan, a director at the camel reserve, said the bigger numbers of camels, based on a survey last spring, was largely due to a decrease in poaching, according to the report. The camels, genetically distinct from their domesticated cousins, roam the vast desert region of Lop Nur, in southeastern Xinjiang, home to China's nuclear tests. They have developed the ability to survive by drinking briny water on the salt flats.

Dung deal: Elephant count surprises in Malaysia

BANGKOK, Thailand (AP)—A count of elephant dung revealed a surprisingly large endangered elephant population—more than 600—in Malaysia's biggest national park, researchers said Thursday. The number of endangered Asian elephants had always been a mystery as researchers tried to visually count every one of the frequently shifting crowd in the dense jungle. But the new method of counting dung piles came up with an estimate of 631 animals living in Taman Negara National Park, the New York-based Wildlife Conservation Society and Malaysia Department of Wildlife and National Parks said. The survey showed Taman Negara to be "one of the great strongholds for Asian elephants in Southeast Asia," said Melvin Gumal, director of the Wildlife Conservation Society's conservation programs in Malaysia.

World

Israeli forces shell UN office in Gaza

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP)—Israeli artillery shells struck the U.N. headquarters in the Gaza Strip on Thursday, setting a food warehouse ablaze and drawing a sharp rebuke from the visiting U.N. chief who called it an "outrage." Another Israeli bombardment killed Hamas' head of security.

The attack added to a day of deadly chaos pitting Israeli troops against Islamic militants. Terrified residents huddled in shelters and stairwells, or scooped up toddlers and fled on foot.

After nightfall, shells landed near Gaza City's Quds Hospital, where many families had sought refuge, and the building caught fire, forcing staff to evacuate hundreds of people. According to a hospital medic, some patients were pushed down the street on gurneys; a few held white flags.

The destruction added to what aid groups say is a humanitarian crisis in Gaza and ratcheted up tensions between Israel and the international community even as diplomats indicated progress in cease-fire talks.

Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni was departing Thursday night for Washington to discuss a Gaza cease-fire with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. The United States and Egypt have been working to forge an agreement to end 20 days of bitter fighting.

The U.N. compound, made up of workshops and warehouses as well as offices, was struck about a half-dozen times over a roughly two-hour period while more than 700 civilians were sheltering there, said John Ging, head of Gaza operations for the U.N. Relief and Works Agency.

The civilians were huddling in the compound's vocational training center when it was struck by a tank round or an artillery shell, causing the three injuries, Ging said. Throughout this time, he said, U.N. officials were frantically contacting Israeli officials to urge an end to the firing on the U.N. compound.

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said Hamas militants opened fire from the U.N. compound. "It is absolutely true that we were attacked from that place, but the consequences are very sad and we apologize for it," he said. The military said it was still investigating.

The attack triggered a raging fire that engulfed a warehouse and destroyed thousands of pounds of food and other aid intended for Gaza's beleaguered citizens. Workers with fire extinguishers and Palestinian firefighters, some wearing bulletproof jackets, struggled to douse flames and tugged bags of flour from the debris.

Fuel supplies and cars in a garage also went up in flames.

Ging said the contacts with Israeli officials were made under a new liaison system aimed at preventing any attack similar to the shelling at a U.N. school in northern Gaza earlier this month that killed about 40 people. At the time, Israel said militants had fired on army positions from the area.

Iran president: 'Not feasible' for Israel to live

CAIRO, Egypt (AP)—A top Israeli envoy delivered his country's stance on a cease-fire agreement in Gaza to Egyptian mediators trying to seal a truce on Thursday. The Iranian president said the fighting showed Israel's continued existence in the region is "not feasible."

The development came as the U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon pressed Israel on a cease-fire, and Gulf leaders gathered in Saudi Arabia to discuss the conflict.

Meanwhile, Israeli troops pushed deeper into densely populated Gaza City on the 20th day of the offensive to rout out Hamas militants. Israeli tanks shelled the crowded downtown, sending terrified residents fleeing for cover.

An Israeli airstrike Thursday evening killed prominent Hamas figure Said Siam, and witnesses and U.N. officials said Israeli shells struck the United Nations headquarters building that serves as a shelter for hundreds of people, setting it ablaze.

WORLD BRIEFS

Last Ethiopian troops leave Somalia's capital

MOGADISHU, Somalia (AP)—The last Ethiopian troops left Somalia's capital on Thursday after a two-year deployment and Islamist militiamen took control of the bases, fueling fears they could try to expand their power in this lawless Horn of Africa nation. Ethiopia's prime minister said he could not predict what would happen when his troops leave Somalia completely, but he expected the extremist Islamic group, al-Shabab, and others to try to seize control. Al-Shabab, which the U.S. considers a terrorist organization with links to al-Qaida, says it wants to establish an Islamic state in Somalia. "It would be strange if the Shabab and others did not try to capitalize on the fact that a significant proportion of the peacekeeping operation in Somalia was leaving and to try to fill in whatever vacuum they feel there is," Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi told journalists in Addis Ababa. "But at the moment, what will happen next is an open question," Meles said.

Venezuela seeks investments from Big Oil

CABIMAS, Venezuela (AP)—Squeezed by slumping crude prices, Venezuela is reaching out to the multinational oil companies it once demonized as imperialist profiteers. Venezuela is soliciting bids from the world's major oil companies to extract heavy crude from vast deposits in its Orinoco River region. Despite President Hugo Chavez's criticism of U.S.-style capitalism, it has become clear that state-owned Petroleos de Venezuela SA needs both the cash and expertise of Big Oil. These international oil companies have made windfall profits in recent years, but analysts doubt many will want to invest again given Chavez's history of seizing foreign stakes in Venezuela's oil. "When it comes to Venezuela, there's still going to be a lot of skepticism," said Greg Priddy, a global oil analyst at the Eurasia Group in Washington D.C. "Chavez is still there and you haven't had a change in government." Venezuela's oil wealth funded a bonanza of social spending that has made Chavez a populist hero not only in Venezuela, but across much of Latin America.

DVD teaches autistic kids what a smile means

LONDON (AP)—It wasn't until Jude met Jenny that the 3-year-old autistic boy understood what happy people look like. Jenny, a green trolley car with a human face, had a furrowed brow when her wheel buckled and she got stuck on a track. But after being rescued by friends, she smiled broadly—and that's when something clicked for little Jude Baines. "It was revelatory," his mother, Caron Freeborn told AP Television News in Cambridge, England. Before watching the video, Jude didn't understand what emotions were and never noticed the expressions on people's faces, even those of his parents or younger brother. Jenny's adventures are part of a DVD for autistic children released this week in the United States called The Transporters. The DVD teaches autistic children how to recognize emotions like happiness, anger and sadness through the exploits of vehicles including a train, a ferry, and a cable car.

Maharlika

PINOY LIFE IN THE MARIANAS

Saturday, January 17, 2009

Balik-tanaw sa kulturang Pinoy

The Bayani Association will host a Filipino cultural show called "Balik-Tanaw Sa Kulturang Pinoy" today, Jan. 17, at 7pm, at the Hibiscus Hall of the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan in Garapan.

The two-hour cultural show and banquet dinner presents 16 cultural dances that portray the Filipinos' regional culture, tradition and arts representing the Philippine islands of Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

The show will highlight the rich and diverse Filipino cultural heritage through the art of creative folk dancing and music.

Among the goals of the event are:

■ To promote and preserve Filipino culture through creative folk dances from various regions in the Philippines and showcasing Filipino fashion and arts;

■ To raise funds for the Bayani Association, with the CNMI's Guma' Esperansa as the chosen beneficiary for the net proceeds of the event;

■ To encourage more members of the Bayani Association—mostly overseas Filipino workers—to actively participate in this recreational activity;

■ To promote values such as unity, perseverance, temperance, and diligence in pursuing the objectives of the Bayani Association.

Filipino cultural dances have five categories: Cordillera, Rural, Maria Clara, Tribal and Muslim. These dances will be choreographed in a creative way by Joel Vallega, i.e., some authentic dance steps would be modified to suit the performer's capabilities without losing the identity of a particular dance. The entire show lasts for about two hours. The participants will showcase Filipiniana fashion by wearing barong Tagalog, baro't saya, patadyong, Maria Clara, Cordillera,tribal and Muslim costumes. Dance music will be accompanied by short introductions for the audience enlightenment.

The Bayani Association is a duly registered non-profit organization in the CNMI with overseas Filipino worker members who successfully completed various free skills upgrading courses at the Filipino Workers Resource Center on Saipan. Among its objectives is to uphold, preserve and promote the fundamental values and culture of the Filipinos through sharing of ideas and information.

UN: 631 metric tons of rice for flood victims

MANILA, Philippines—The United Nations' World Food Programme has announced that it would be providing up to 631 metric tons of rice to some 25,000 families affected by the recent flash floods and landslides in the four areas of Cagayan De Oro City, Misamis Oriental, Lanao Del Norte, and Lanao Del Sur.

WFP is providing rice to those affected by the renewed fighting between government forces and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

In a statement e-mailed to media outfits, WFP Country Director and Representative Stephen Anderson said the rice provision was in response to requests by provincial and local governments, and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). He said it also followed a WFP rapid assessment of affected areas which showed the need to extend help to farmers and fisher folk.

The WFP assessment said most people affected by thecontinuing rains were in evacuation centers and were "reportedly highly vulnerable due to growing food insecurity."

EMBASSY CLASH AP

U.S. Embassy security personnel and policemen use shields to disperse Filipino student activists as they march in front of the embassy in Manila, Philippines, to condemn the Israeli air and ground assaults in Gaza. The demonstrators called Israel and the U.S. "the world's number one terrorist."

Catanduanes put under state of calamity

By FERNAN GIANAN
SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU

VIRAC, Catanduanes—As recommended by the Provincial Disaster Coordinating Council chaired by Governor Joseph Cua, the Sangguniang Panlalawigan has declared a state of calamity on the island, except for Virac and San Andres.

The declaration allows for the allocation of P7.5 million to finance relief and rehabilitation efforts in the wake of recent landslides and flash floods.

Vice Governor Alfred M. Aquino clarified that the funds would be used to support municipal governments' relief efforts and that the local government units must first utilize their own calamity funds.

"We cannot spend beyond this amount since we are just starting the year," Aquino said, expressing hope that there will be no more calamities in the coming months.

He said the provincial board can extend the declaration to cover Virac and San Andres if warranted by supplemental damage reports.

As of last week, however, not one of the nine towns covered by the declaration has declared a state of calamity on its own. Nearly 3,000 ferry passengers were stranded, mostly at Tabaco port as the Philippine Coast Guard suspended trips to and from the island for several days due to rough seas.

Heavy rains that isolated towns and villages led to a critical food situation.

The latest PDCC situation report said one person died while 232 houses were damaged by landslides and flashfloods that began January 6 after an eight-hour downpour.

17 *rescued off Masbate*

LEGAZPI CITY—Fishermen rescued 17 people from a motorized boat forced to seek shelter from huge waves churned up by strong winds, the Philippine Coast Guard reported Friday.

The M/B Noynoy, bound for Pilar, Sorsogon from Masbate City had to take shelter near San Miguel Island at around 2 p.m. Thursday, said Police Officer 2 Glicerio Villaluz of the PCG in Bicol.

Fishermen within the vicinity rescued the passengers and took them to Guinhadap village in Monreal, Masbate, where they could wait safely until the waves subside.

Sea travel has been intermittently cancelled in Bicol, stranding more than 2,500 passengers in various ports since Wednesday.

Corazon Samar, chief meteorologist of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration said the strong winds were caused by the northeast monsoon, which is hitting the country's eastern seaboard until end of February.

She said the winds in Southern Luzon were as strong as 30 kilometers per hour.

Waves could be as high as 3.7 meters to 6 meters.

LABOR FRONT

Hours of work, worksites

By FERDIE PONCE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Q: If a domestic helper lives in the same house with his or her employer, is "rest time" considered working hours?

A: No. According to the Labor Employment Rules and Regulations, a domestic helper who lives in the same household as the employer and is on "sleeping time" or "rest time" is not on working hours.

If an alien worker accepts employer-supplied housing, the employer shall not require the worker to remain in the housing during non-working hours or take or threaten to take any adverse action against the worker for refusing to remain in the housing during non-working hours.

■ ■ ■

Q: Should the hours of work be indicated in an alien worker's approved employment contract?

A: The Regulations state that the hours of work shall be specified in the approved employment contract. The employers may offer overtime work to alien employees, but they are not required to provide the workers overtime job.

Any period of time during which the worker is required to be present at any location within the Commonwealth designated by his or her employer shall be considered working hours for purposes of determining wages and overtime pay.

■ ■ ■

Q: Are alien workers permitted to have one or more worksites?

A: According to the Regulations, an alien worker may have one or more worksites, but he or she may be assigned on only one island. The island where a foreign national worker will be assigned to work must be stated in the approved employment contract or in an approved change to the employment contract.

The Regulations state that assigning an alien worker to work in a location not specified in the approved employment contract or in an approved contract change is a ground for denial of a renewal of the contracts.

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Rescue mission on to free kidnapped aid workers

By JIM GOMEZ
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—An army general said he hopes to rescue three kidnapped Red Cross workers in the southern Philippines before they are handed over to militants notorious for demanding ransoms.

The gunmen on motorcycles intercepted a vehicle carrying the three representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross on their way to Jolo airport on the southern island where al-Qaida-linked Abu Sayyaf militants are known to hide. The workers are from Italy, Switzerland and the Philippines.

The driver and two other Filipinos were released and reported the incident, Philippine National Red Cross Chairman Richard Gordon told The Associated Press.

Maj. Gen. Juancho Sabban, head of Jolo's anti-terrorism task force, said their vehicle was found abandoned near mountainous Patikul town, the scene of many clashes between troops and Abu Sayyaf militants hiding in thick jungles.

The gunmen took the hostages into Patikul's rain forest and headed toward nearby Indanan township, possibly to turn the hostages over to notorious Abu Sayyaf commander Albader Parad, Sabban told The AP by telephone from Jolo.

Abu Sayyaf militants are notorious for beheading their hostages and are on a U.S. list of terrorist organizations with links to al-Qaida.

American counterterrorism troops were providing noncombat "assistance and advice" to Philippine forces, a U.S. military official said on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the media.

Marines equipped with night-vision goggles were pursuing the kidnappers on foot after their vehicles got stuck in thick mud, Sabban said. "That jungle is so dense, you couldn't see each other even at a close distance."

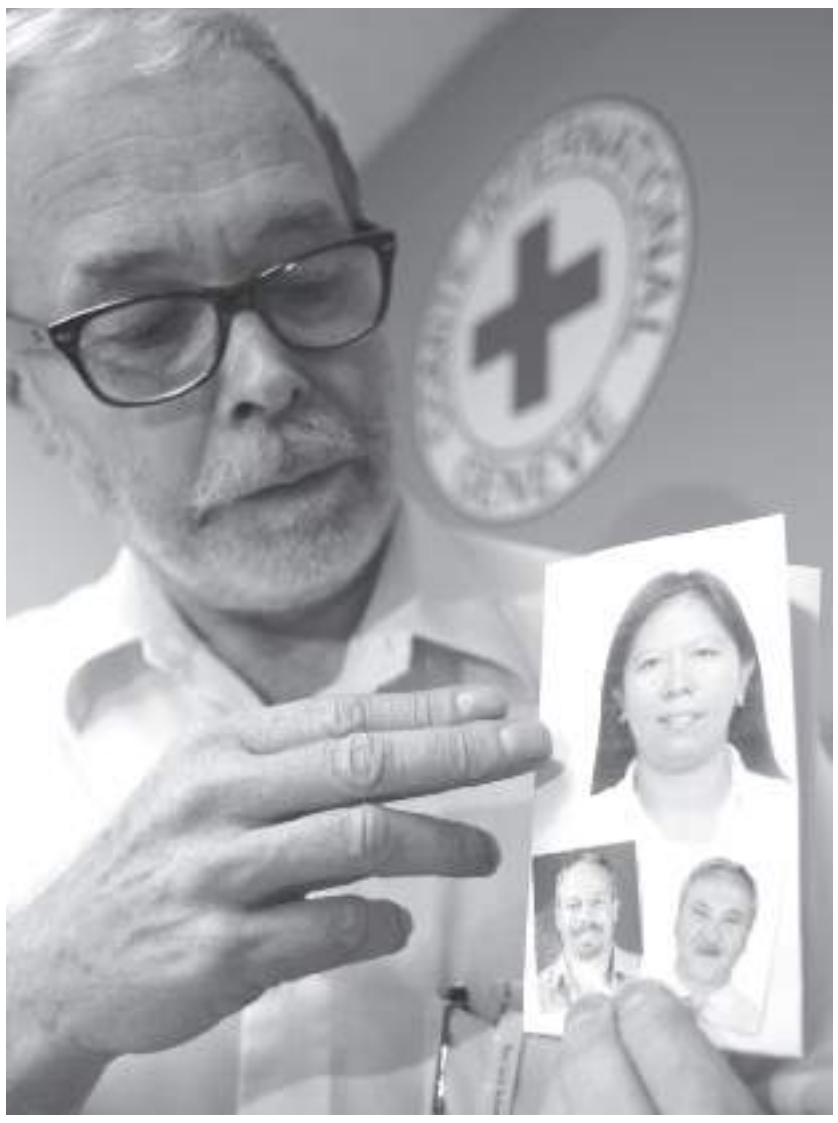
The kidnapped workers were identified as Swiss Andreas Notter, 38; Italian Eugenio Vagni, 62; and Filipino Mary Jean Lacaba, 37. They had traveled to Jolo to inspect water sanitation projects in Jolo's provincial jail and in nearby Maimbung township.

The Italian Foreign Ministry said Vagni comes from Montevarchi, near the Tuscan city of Arezzo. Francesco Rocca, the head of the Italian Red Cross, said Vagni, an engineer, has been working in the Philippines for the last two years. He said the Red Cross would continue to work in the area.

"The Red Cross remains on the ground, which is neither a positive nor a negative sign. It just means that the situation still needs to be clarified," Rocca told AP Television News in Rome.

Sabban said the Red Cross workers had refused military escorts. The Red Cross says they cannot accept such offers because they are neutral.

"These gunmen don't see them as Red Cross. They see them as dollar signs," Sabban said.



AP

Roland Bigler, communications, cooperation delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross, shows pictures of kidnapped ICRC workers, Filipino Jean Lacaba, top, Swiss national Andreas Notter and Italian Eugenio Vagni at the office in Makati, south of Manila on Thursday Jan. 15, 2009.

Andreas Notter

Eugenio Vagni

Mary Jean Lacaba

It was the most high-profile kidnapping of foreigners since 2001, when Abu Sayyaf gunmen snatched nearly two dozen tourists from a resort, including three Americans. One was beheaded and the other was killed during a military rescue operation. The incident prompted Washington to deploy troops in the south starting in 2002, but they are barred from combat.

In 2000, Abu Sayyaf seized about 20 foreign tourists from Malaysia's Sipadan resort and held them on Jolo for several months before they were released in exchange for millions of dollars, reportedly paid by Libya.

Security officials have said the militants are resorting to kidnappings for ransom because they are running out of funds. The number of kidnappings in the south involving Abu Sayyaf and other Muslim rebels jumped from 11 in 2007 to 27 last year, said Leonardo Espina, chief of a police anti-kidnapping task force.

More than 380 Abu Sayyaf fighters—down from 1,000 from 2001-02—are hiding mainly in the hinterlands of predominantly Muslim Jolo and Basilan islands, according to police and the military.

The restive region is home to a decades-old Muslim separatist rebellion.

A look at major kidnappings being blamed on Abu Sayyaf

By The Associated Press

A look at major kidnappings in the southern Philippines attributed to the al-Qaida-linked Abu Sayyaf and other armed groups. Three international Red Cross workers—a Swiss, an Italian and a Filipino—were abducted on Jolo island on Thursday.

- **March 2000:** More than 50 school children, teachers and a Roman Catholic priest are kidnapped on southern Basilan island. The priest is tortured and killed while two male teachers are beheaded. The others escaped or are rescued by troops.
- **April 2000:** 21 people, including mostly European tourists, are seized from Malaysia's Sipadan resort and taken in speedboats to Jolo; all were freed in exchange for millions of dollars in ransom reportedly financed by Libya. More than a dozen foreign and local journalists covering the hostage crisis also end up hostages. Some pay ransom, others escape.
- **July 2000:** 12 members of a Christian evangelical group are kidnapped while visiting an Abu Sayyaf camp to pray for the release of foreign hostages. They walk free after ransom is paid.
- **August 2000:** Jeffrey Schilling, an American Muslim convert, kidnapped while visiting an Abu Sayyaf camp on Jolo island. He escapes after almost eight months.
- **May 2001:** Three Americans and 17 other tourists are snatched from the Dos Palmas resort in southwestern Palawan province. One American is killed and another freed during an army rescue. The third American was beheaded.
- **August 2001:** 33 Christian residents of Balobo village on Basilan are taken hostage and 10 are beheaded.
- **April 2004:** Three crewmen of a Malaysian tugboat are abducted off Malaysia's Sabah state; believed to have either died of illness or killed by their captors.
- **June 2007:** Italian priest, Giancarlo Bossi, is kidnapped and held for 39 days.
- **January 2009:** Gunmen kidnap three workers of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Philippine floods and slides kill 20

MANILA (Reuters)—Floods and landslides caused by almost a week of unseasonal heavy rains have killed 20 people and displaced 300,000 in the eastern and southern Philippines, officials said Thursday.

Wide areas on the southern island of Mindanao and in the eastern part of the archipelago from the Bicol region to Samar and Leyte islands were inundated, said Glenn Rabonza, head of the government's disaster agency.

"We're experiencing an unusual heavy downpour brought by the tail-end of the cold front," Rabonza told reporters, adding many areas have been submerged under 4-6 feet (1.2-2 metres) of floodwaters.

Rabonza said about 20 people had drowned in swollen rivers or been buried in landslides while 63,000 families or slightly more than 300,000 people had to leave their homes because of the freak weather conditions.

Local officials and church leaders on Mindanao, the hardest hit area, appealed to the president and non-government agencies to send food, potable water and blankets to more than 115,000 people displaced.

"We don't have enough food despite donations coming in from private groups and individuals," said Constantino Jaraula, mayor of the southern port city of Cagayan de Oro, adding the supply may last only four days.

"Every hour the number of affected families increases. We're appealing for help."

Landslides and flash floods are common across the Philippines during the monsoon months between May and October. Officials said they were surprised by the heavy and continuous rains at this time of the year.

Food shortage looms amid flooding

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—The rising number of people being displaced by floods and storm surges in Northern Mindanao have threatened food supply as local government units make do with meager funds, an official said Thursday.

The Office of the Civil Defense (OCD) in the region said at least 115,000 people had already fled to safety as of Wednesday while three people were confirmed killed as floods and 6-foot waves continued to batter coastal villages here and in the cities of Gingoog and Iligan.

Eighteen towns in Misamis Oriental are also flooded due to torrential rains, which the Philippine Atmospheric and Geophysical Services Administration (Pagasa) said could last for days.

In this city alone, where 46 villages remained under water, officials said funds for food assistance were running out.

"What the city government can provide is not enough despite the donations coming in from private groups or individuals since every hour the number of affected families increases," Erwin Culanag, city information officer, told the Inquirer.

Mayor Constantino Jaraula said food supply could last for four days only. Jaraula said aside from food, the evacuees also needed mats and blankets to warm them up inside evacuation centers.

Bishop Felixberto Calang, of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente, said this is a time when kind-hearted people are really needed.

"There is not enough food ... whenever we cook for a meal, it has to be equally divided so everyone will have a meal even if it is not a full one for as long as it could fill their hungry stomachs," Calang said.

Cagayan Archbishop Antonio Ledesma said while the immediate needs of the people are being provided, the city government should also look into the root cause of the floods.

"Let us not forget the root cause of this disaster, which are the massive logging activities ... we need to look back," said Ledesma.

Armen Cuenca, head of the Oro Alert Rescue Group, said even when the rains have already weakened, they are worried about the possibility of more landslides occurring in hinterland areas.

"The soil has loosened and we are asking residents in landslide prone areas to leave temporarily or bring to safer grounds the women, children, the elderly and the sick," Cuenca said.

On Wednesday, a major landslide occurred in Sitio Kabula in Barangay Lumbia, an upland village near the airport. ***(Philippine Daily Inquirer)***

OFW remittances up 10.5 percent in Nov.

Foreign exchange remitted by overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) rose 10.5 percent to $1.3 billion in November from a year earlier, accelerating from a 3.3-percent rise to $1.4 billion in October, as the holiday season grew nearer, according to central bank data released Thursday.

The January-November total reached $15.02 billion, up 15.1 percent from the same period in 2007.

"Steady stream of remittances from overseas Filipinos continues to provide the economy with much needed foreign exchange liquidity in the midst of a challenging external environment," Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. of the central bank, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), said in a statement.

BSP data on OFW remittances do not include funds sent through informal channels, such as personal couriers of the overseas workers, which the government estimates at five percent of the overall total.

The BSP estimates the 2008 full-year rise in remittances through banks and other official channels at 13 percent from the 2007 level. For this year, it expects a rise of 6-9 percent, given the economic slowdown in the United States and Europe.

In November, the biggest sources of remittances from January to November were the US, Saudi Arabia, the United Kingdom, Italy, the United Arab Emirates, Japan, Singapore and Hong Kong.

OFWs deployed in the January-November period numbered 1.22 million, up 24.4 percent from 982,286 in the same months in 2007. ***(INQUIRER.net)***

RP Congress joins calls to end Gaza war

By LIRA DALANGIN-FERNANDEZ
INQUIRER.NET

MANILA, Philippines—Congress has joined international calls to end the war between Israel and Hamas militants in Gaza, which has killed close to a thousand people and displaced thousands more.

Speaker Prospero Nograles filed House Resolution 926 urging both sides to abide by the United Nations Resolution 1860 calling for ceasefire in Gaza.

"We have to join and support the international effort to end this war," Nograles said in a statement. He said that the ongoing war was "just making worse the current global economic crisis."

A total of 91 Filipinos remain in Israel.

On Jan. 8, 2009, the UN Security Council approved Resolution 1860 calling for an immediate ceasefire and withdrawal of Israeli troops. It calls on members states "to support international efforts to alleviate the humanitarian and economic situation in Gaza," and side by side in peace with secure and recognized borders, as envisaged in Security Council Resolution 1850 [2008], and recalls also the importance of the Arab Peace Initiative."

Among others, UN Resolution 1860 "calls for renewed and urgent efforts by the parties and the international community to achieve a comprehensive peace based on the vision of a region where two democratic states, Israel and Palestine, live condemns all violence and hostilities directed against civilians and all terrorist act.

Kidnap victim rescued in Laguna

By ABIGAIL KWOK
INQUIRER.NET

MANILA, Philippines—Police rescued a kidnap victim and arrested five suspects in an entrapment operation in the province of Laguna Thursday, a police official said on Friday.

Adjib Tiburon, 30, was rescued after two weeks in captivity in San Pablo City, said Senior Superintendent Manolito Labador, Laguna provincial police chief. Tiburon was kidnapped in Quiapo, Manila last January 2.

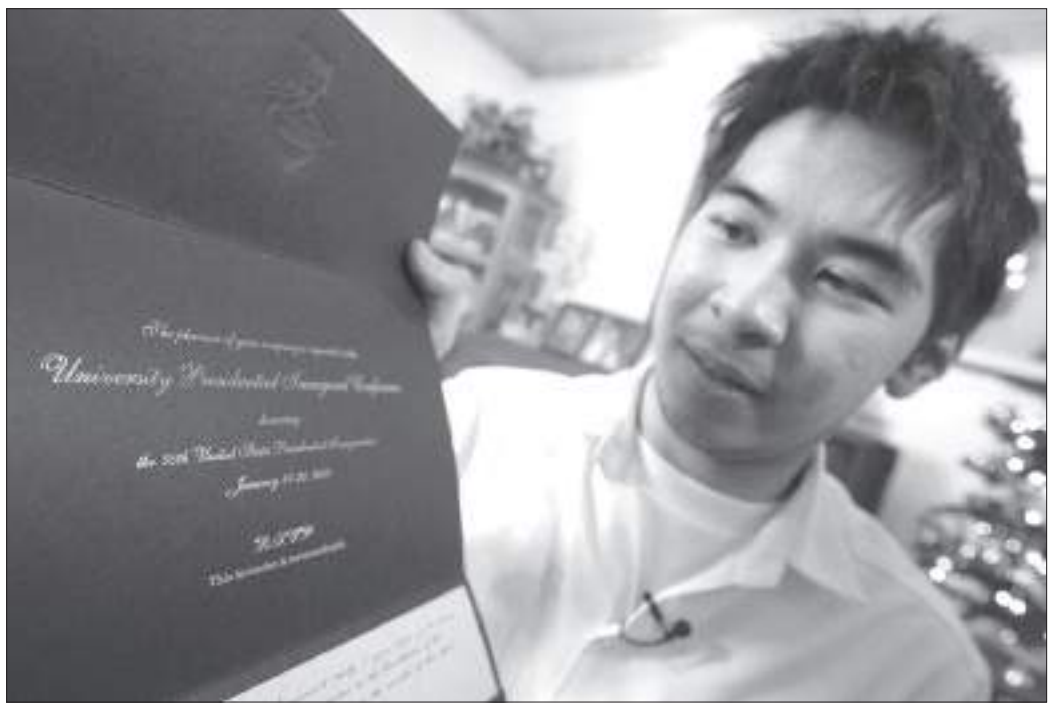
Police identified the five suspects as Sarah and Raja Moda Musline, Mancao Arid, Dominador Junior Mala-Uni, and Esmael Baramabaga. They allegedly demanded P600,000 ransom for the release of the victim.

After more than a week of surveillance, police arranged an entrapment operation with the victim's relatives who coordinated with the lawmen.

The ransom was delivered at the suspects' safehouse at Purok 2, Alcaras Subdivision, Barangay (village) Sto. Niño, San Pablo City.

Recovered from the suspects were one Toyota Corolla vehicle (TNR-721), one caliber .38 pistol, and two mobile phones.

All the suspects will be facing inquest proceedings this Friday at the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) in Manila, Labador said.



INAUGURATION INVITATION AP
Filipino Paul Michael Pilares Cruz looks at his invitation to attend President-elect Barack Obama's inauguration, at his home in suburban Quezon City, north of Manila, Philippines, on Wednesday Jan. 14, 2009. The 19-year-old college freshman cannot believe his luck: He is one of only two Filipinos to be invited to President-elect Barack Obama's inauguration, an event that excludes even his country's president.

Arroyo congratulates, thanks Bush

By JOEL GUINTO
INQUIRER.NET

MANILA, Philippines—President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has sent a congratulatory letter to outgoing United States President George W. Bush and thanked him for maintaining close ties with the Philippines, Malacañang said.

Bush will relinquish his post to president-elect Barrack Obama on January 20, after eight years in office over which he increasingly came under fire for the US-led invasion of Iraq and a recession that has spread globally.

"President Arroyo has sent a letter of congratulations to President Bush for the very good relationship we had. Among others, it was mentioned, the support of the US government is providing the Philippines, in the economy, as well as in security," Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said.

Ermita expressed hopes the ties between Manila and Wahsington would remain strong under Obama.

"It has been our experience that the US government is very supportive [of the Philippines] as allies," Ermita said.

Arroyo has supported the US-led war against terrorism, and US forces continue to undertake joint exercises with Filipino troops under her administration.

Gordon asks govt to save jailed sailors

By MICHAEL LIM UBAC
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MANILA, Philippines—Sen. Richard Gordon has castigated the government for allegedly failing to rescue 13 Filipino crew members of a Greek-owned oil tanker who were arrested by the Nigerian government on suspicion of stealing thousands of tons of crude oil and have been languishing in jail since November.

Gordon said he would like the Department of Foreign Affairs to say what really happened in the case of the 13 seamen and whether they have been provided with legal representation in the Nigerian court.

"The government should be doing the necessary actions to help them," he said, as he called on the DFA, the Overseas Workers' Welfare Administration (OWWA) and the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) to look into the cases of the jailed Filipino seamen. He called on the POEA to cancel the license of Seagem, the local manning agent of the Greek ship owner Maritime Management Synergy, "which is suspected to have dealings with rebel groups in the Niger Delta."

He identified the 13 seafarers as Erwin Antas, Ronie Fabricante, Celso Zapanta, Pedro Germentiza, Marcelo Galola, George Balore, Ruel Dosdos, Arjay Alvarez, Rolan Rao, Richard Peniano, Celso Baez, Reagan and Sebastian Teodosio.

TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR MONEY

Good debt vs. bad debt

Editor's Note: This is part of Take Charge of Your Money, a partnership between INQUIRER.net and Citibank to help readers handle their personal finances well.

Question: I'm thinking of taking steps to improve my family's life this 2009. For starters, we'd like to buy a house so we can stop renting. It would also be good if we can get a car so it won't be hard to get around with my family--a wife and two small kids. To do all these, I'm hoping to get a loan from the bank. Is this good or bad, considering the state of the world economy? I don't like having debts to pay, but if I don't avail of a loan, it would take me forever to save up for a house and a car. – Joseph

Answer: Most people who buy cars and homes for their families do not have the cash saved up to pay off these purchases right away. If they did, they would be millionaires and part of the upper crust of society. Almost all home buyers and new car owners avail of loans which will allow them to enjoy a new home and a car now and amortize the cost of buying them over a number of years.

Although you don't like going into debt, this may be one time when it would be good to go into debt. There is such a thing as good debt and bad debt.

Good debt is when you avail of a loan to buy an asset that would appreciate over time or will give you good value or use over the years. Examples of good debt include availing of a loan to buy a house or fund a business that would generate income for you.

Bad debt, on the other hand, is availing of a loan that would be used to purchase something that would depreciate or decrease in value over time. This will cost you more over the years.

Debts have a cost attached to them. You have to pay for the cost of borrowing, which is interest. And when you miss a payment, you would also have to pay other charges including penalties, depending on what's covered in your loan contract.

Debts are a great responsibility. If you default on a loan, your credit history will be affected, which may disqualify you from taking another loan in the future. This is why one should think twice about going into debt. If you can, take only good debt.

If you are serious about availing of a loan, heed our tips to make the most of it:

1. When choosing a home, consider its location. It should have the potential to appreciate in value over time. Some indicators of good location and appreciating value include proximity to schools, shopping malls, business districts, and commercial areas. Visit the location first before committing to buy a home.

2. Think of ways to maximize the use of the asset you're buying. For instance, you can rent out the property if your family will not use it as a residence, or rent out one room to a boarder. If you are getting a car, consider carpooling so as to lower your gasoline cost.

3. Shop around for the best terms before signing on the dotted line. Go to several banks and financing companies and compare rates and other terms. Generally, in-house financing offered by real estate companies and car companies are the most expensive. Choose the one that offers the best.

4. Find ways to lower your cost of borrowing. Check out loans available with the Social Security System, Government Service Insurance System, and PAG-IBIG Fund. If you are buying a car, consider trading in your old one to lower the cost of purchasing a new car. It may even be wiser to buy a one-year-old car than a brand new one. It will be cheaper, yet still give you good mileage.

5. Always read the fine print before signing documents. Read about penalties, defaults, and the like. Find out if there are penalties for prepayments. If none, pay off the loan faster if you can to save on interest expense.

6. Safeguard loan documents. Keep them in a safe place but make sure your spouse knows where these can be located.

A debt can be a good tool to secure your financial future. Go into it only after careful thought and manage it well.

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Maharlika – PinoyStyle

Left out of Oscars, 'Ploning' is unfazed

By BAYANI SAN DIEGO JR.
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MANILA, Philippines—Against all odds, the "Ploning" team remained upbeat.

In a text message, actress and producer Judy Ann Santos said: "Lobbying for 'Ploning' at the Oscars was an overwhelmingly blessed experience. It allowed us to raise the banner for the Philippines and Filipinos in Hollywood. For this opportunity, we are humbled and grateful."

Co-star Ces Quesada agreed. In a text message, she said: "Being in the Palm Springs festival has made me feel that although the Oscars is the ultimate prize ... the warm reception and encouraging comments and interest in the Philippines are enough to validate our efforts. It was a good fight and I am glad we did it. Ika nga, kung hindi susubukan paano mananalo? (If we don't try, how can we win?)"

Rolando S. Atienza, chair of the Film Development Council of the Philippines (FDCP) which gave a P2.5-million grant for the film's Oscar campaign, noted: "It's worth the experience. This is the first time that the government supported a Filipino film for the Oscars. Obviously, there is more work to be done, more knowledge to be learned, so that our efforts will be more effective. With this year's experience, next year will be a better year."

When news broke of the non-inclusion of "Ploning" in the Top 9 of the Best Foreign Language Film category of the Oscars on Tuesday night (California time), the Filipino film had just had its second screening at the 20th Palm Springs International Film Festival.

Judy Ann Santos is a scene from the movie 'Ploning.'

At that time, the cast (led by actors Judy Ann Santos, Quesada and Meryll Soriano) and crew (led by director Dante Nico Garcia and producer Guia Gonzales) were in high spirits.

In a text message sent to the Philippine Daily Inquirer, Quesada related: "We're now having a party (held at the Azul Bar in downtown Palm Springs) after the second screening. We've been playing to full houses. A third screening is in the works."

Quesada said audience feedback had been "overwhelming."

"So many people are interested in the Philippines," she recalled. "Dante is the toast of the town. They liked Judai (Santos' nickname), too. They praised her acting ... even her dress by Paul Cabral."

"Ploning" is set in the small island of Cuyo in Palawan province and features the "dying" Cuyonon language and culture.

Only one Asian country—Japan—managed to secure a slot, although Israel and Turkey were also represented in a line-up dominated by European films.

Why Angel shed tears

By BAYANI SAN DIEGO JR.
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MANILA, Philippines—On last Sunday's "ASAP," Angel Locsin cried rather profusely while promoting her latest film, "Love Me Again: Land Down Under," with Piolo Pascual.

Could there be trouble between her and real-life love Luis Manzano?

On "The Buzz" that same afternoon, Angel declined to elaborate, cryptically stating, "You can't have it all."

"All she let on was that it's a personal problem," Angel's manager, Becky Aguila, said.

Has Angel's steamy love scene with Piolo become a source of discord between the actress and Luis?

"He knows about it, but I didn't ask permission for it," she told "Buzz" host Boy Abunda. "I don't want to be in a relationship if you have to worry about your every move."

Angel said they make it a point to give each other space. "I am proud of his achievements. I wouldn't hinder his growth. We support each other."

Abunda found Angel's statements puzzling because, in his interview with her "just a week ago, she said she's 100 percent happy about her love life and career."

At the press gathering two days earlier for the same movie, Angel looked and sounded upbeat, gabbing candidly about Luis and their recent trip to Macau with his mom Gov. Vilma Santos and stepfather Ralph Recto.

Thumbs up

"I look up to his mom and stepdad and it's great that I had the chance to spend time and bond with them," she said.

Luis' dad, Edu Manzano, has been all-thumbs-up for Angel, saying, "They look good together."

He echoed Gov. Vi's observation that Luis had become "more mature and responsible"

Angel Locsin

because of Angel.

"I am thankful that they appreciate me," Angel noted. "I feel the same way about them."

Edu even said that he'd welcome a grandchild, courtesy of Angel and Luis.

"Problem is, we're not ready for that," Angel quipped.

Luis' mom told the Inquirer via SMS on Sunday: "I don't know [what's going on]. I'm just waiting for them to call and talk to me. I don't want to meddle."

Diether meets Chris Cornell

By DOLLY ANNE CARVAJAL
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MANILA, Philippines—Diether Ocampo was ecstatic to meet renowned musician Chris Cornell, former Soundgarden and Audioslave frontman, during his shoot with his family for Baby Couture magazine's Spring issue.

"My band Blow used to do covers of Chris' songs," said Diet. "I'm a big fan of his music. It was a great experience to get to talk to him."

Anything Chris said that made an impact on Diet? "He told me that we should not cease surprising ourselves. Who knows? Lightning might strike."

Thunderous applause comes that way.

No more hurts

Jomari Yllana is not prone to jealousy attacks even if his girlfriend Pops Fernandez will be reunited with her ex-hubby Martin Nievera in their "Missing You" concert (Feb. 6 at the Big Dome).

"I've realized that Pops will never look at me the same way she looked at Martin," Jom muses. "I am convinced that she can never love me the same manner that she loved him. The key to any relationship is to respect a partner's once broken heart."

Seeing Pipay and Mart together again on stage will bring back wonderful memories. Like when we had golf tournaments in Alabang. Pops took up golf because Martin was so into it. Even in the golf course, she was quite a fashionista. "If you can't play, display," Pipay used to say.

Martin and Pops may no longer be able to relive those moments but even just for one night, they will recapture the joy through their songs.

Guess list

A director got so exasperated with an actress during their shoot for a TV ad. She was supposed to have a long spiel promoting the product. But even after endless rehearsal takes, the actress could not enunciate the words properly. So Direk had no other recourse but to scrap all her lines except one.

"Ang ikli nalang nga nung sasabihin niya, palpak pa din," revealed an ad agency insider. "May problem talaga siya sa diction. Kaya no choice yung client. They aired the ad even if they're not exactly satisfied with her way of speaking."

The sought-after actress is better seen than heard. EARitating eye-candy?

A modeling world kibitzer insists that the real cause of the breakup of an actor and an actress is a hot male Brazilian model. Nope, Mr. Latin Lover didn't snatch away the actress but the actor! Gay ka na ba? Gay na gay na!

Raving about Bukidnon

Piolo Pascual fell in love with Bukidnon while shooting his movie "Love Me Again" with Angel Locsin in the province. It is about two lovers whose romance is rudely interrupted by economic necessity.

"Ibang klase yung calmness na binigay sa akin ng Bukidnon," said PJ. "Doon ko na-feel na you don't need material things to enjoy life. Mountains, greens and lakes lang OK na."

During the last few days of their shoot, PJ opted to sleep in the only house in the middle of the mountains. He then proceeded with a week-long fasting, which ends Jan. 15. Today happens to be his birthday.

PJ's got it all but he likes to keep it simple. Ah! The incredible uniqueness of being Piolo Pascual!

Not ready

Karylle is blasé about Jericho Rosales' admiration for her. "Honestly, at this point, I'm not ready for anything beyond friendship," says K.

After the Dingdong Dantes chapter in her life, K has gone daring in her pictorials but her heart remains cautious. Body is willing, heart is weak?

Gabby greets Sharon; fans ecstatic

By BAYANI SAN DIEGO JR.
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MANILA, Philippines—For fans of the Sharon-Gabby love team, it was historic — to put it mildly.

Sharon Cuneta marked her 43rd birthday at the Araneta Coliseum on Friday with a show featuring big-name guests as usual, including Arnel Pineda, Zsazsa Padilla, Kuh Ledesma, Gary Valenciano, Ai Ai de las Alas, Vina Morales, Sarah Geronimo, Rachelle Ann Go and Piolo Pascual.

But the show-stopper was a videotaped message from San Francisco, California, from ex-husband Gabby Concepcion.

In her previous birthday shows, screen partners like Richard Gomez and Robin Padilla would invariably greet Sharon; Gabby was always the 300-pound gorilla no one dared mention onstage.

Until last Friday. Gabby's videotaped greeting (he is vacationing with his family in the US) stunned the approximately 10,000 spectators. But only for a while.

Suddenly, they were ecstatic. The cheers were so deafening, it completely drowned out the greeting. "I thought the stage would collapse," Sharon later commented in her dressing room.

Earlier, a TV interviewer asked if that was a tear he saw falling from her eyes after Gabby's message. Sharon jokingly replied, "No, that was sweat!"

It could henceforth be known as the birthday greeting, publicly ending years of estrangement between the former reel- and real-life partners whose union produced a string of box-office hits, and 23-year-old daughter KC Concepcion, now a full-fledged singer-actress herself.

Sharon greeted Gabby's present wife, Genevieve, and their daughter Samantha onstage.

But to set things straight, Sharon pointed out that, for her, the most touching part of the birthday show ("Songs of My Heart," aired yesterday on ABS-CBN), was the videotaped message of her current husband, Sen. Francis Pangilinan, and their two young daughters Frankie and Miel, who were in the audience.

"I could feel that our fans really wanted to see me happy and my family complete," she explained. She hoped her family's presence that night would hopefully end all speculation about her marriage.

KC thrilled

Late last year, the Pangilinans' rumored separation hogged headlines. Sharon admitted that they had a minor tiff at that time, but that it was blown out of proportion. "OA (overacting) nga."

KC once again performed a perilous stunt during the program, a jazz number with the G Force dancers, done while she balanced on a see-saw. Last year, she "flew" while attached to a harness. But the thrill of hearing Gabby greet Sharon seemed more exhilarating for KC. "Peace at last," KC told the Philippine Daily Inquirer.

Maharlika – Opinyon

Knave's English

I can't think of anything more hilarious than the House of Representatives debating Rep. Eduardo Gullas's bill demanding that English, and English alone, be used as medium of instruction in Philippine schools. His bill proposes to do away with the bilingual policy that dates back to 1974.

What makes it hilarious you'll know if you've listened to the House debates, some of which have been aired on TV. They would positively make an elementary English teacher cringe. My apologies to my Cebuano friends, but I don't know why Cebuanos, or their officials, like to imagine, they stood first in line when God, or the Americans, distributed English. There's little evidence of it. Accent is the least of their problems.

Of course Miriam Santiago is neither a representative nor a Cebuano, she is a senator and an Ilonggo, but, Jesus, can you imagine a whole new generation of Filipinos speaking like her?

What makes it even more hilarious, of the kind that hurts when you laugh, is that the House of Representatives should be in any position to debate the virtues of language when it has proven itself only to be a Tower of Babel. That is a pit that harbors many tongues, not of them harboring the most essential element of any language, without which communication is not possible. That element is truth. That House speaks the language of power, it speaks the language of money, it speaks the language of selfishness and greed. But it does not speak the language of truth.

Neither English nor Tagalog—nor indeed Cebuano—will be able to help that.

The bill's premise is wrong to begin with. The decline of English in these parts has nothing to do with the bilingual policy in education. It has to do with the decline in reading, a habit few congressmen have been known to indulge in. Even English-speaking countries have experienced a decline at least in good English, if not in English itself, from reading falling into disrepute among their inhabitants. Add to that the language of text messages and the deterioration is complete.

In fact we do have the most compelling reason to adopt a bilingual policy. This point is largely ignored in our periodic debates about whether to use English or Tagalog as the medium of instruction, if not indeed as the national language. It's a point I myself have largely ignored until the last dozen years or so.

There's The Rub

By CONRADO DE QUIROS

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

It hit me like a ton of bricks in a media conference abroad some years ago. I was astonished to learn how we truly stuck out as the odd man in Asia even in media. Elsewhere in Asia, the mass circulation newspapers are in the local languages, mass circulation meaning several million copies or so a day for each of them. Our mass circulation newspapers are in English, and our combined broadsheets do not even reach a million copies a day.

The knee-jerk reaction is to say: So why don't we publish local-language newspapers and so produce mass circulation ones? But you realize that there precisely is the rub. Whether we like it or not, we do have a bilingual practice, if not policy, in language. We speak in the local languages, but we read (and write) in English. Some do speak in English, it is their first language, but they are few and far between. Most of us speak in Tagalog or some other local language—I speak in Tagalog, English and Bicol in that order, Bicol being last simply because I have few people to talk with in it—but read newspapers, books, and other materials in English.

Two things prove the wisdom of the bilingual policy beyond a shadow of doubt. One is the death of English on prime time TV news, and two is the death of Tagalog in broadsheets. No one produces an (exclusively) English-language TV newscast now because it has no audience, and no one produces a Tagalog broadsheet now (tabloid is another matter entirely, and best left for another day) because it has no audience.

To insist that the kids speak in English to express themselves in schools, or that the teacher teaches Science and Math in English and require students to answer in the same language, is to insist that the tail wag the dog. It is not only cruel, it is idiotic. All the studies show that kids learn best in their own language, and conversely that they learn hardest in a foreign one. Filipino kids trying to learn Science and Math in English do double the work Japanese kids do in trying to learn Science and Math in Japanese, or Thai kids do trying to learn Science and Math in Thai. And the results show it. Filipino kids do poorly in both as compared with Japanese or Thai kids.

But just as well, to insist that kids read and write in Tagalog or the other local languages is to insist that the tail wag the dog. I know it's a cumbersome process speaking in Tagalog and the local languages and reading and writing in English, but the alternative is worse. I doubt many Filipinos will be able to make the transition to reading and writing in Tagalog, as those who tried to publish Tagalog-language broadsheets have learned the hard way. Things are not going to get easier with the Internet.

The bilingual policy in education remains a most intelligent and enlightened policy, taking stock as it does of existing realities and building on them. I suspect the fetish with English with some Filipinos, congressmen included, isn't just practical, it is colonial. It goes back to Jose Rizal's time when the "indios" [natives] were denied Spanish, which gave us the idea that being able to speak the language of the colonizer made up for our snub noses and dark skins. It does not.

In any case, Mark Twain was right: It is better to keep quiet and look like a fool than to open your mouth and confirm it. It is also better to not speak English and look like a fool than open your mouth and confirm it.

EDITORIAL

Uneven growth

Officials who still believe that the reduction of poverty and inequality should have the highest priority would do well to read the 2009 World Development Report of the World Bank. There they will find at least part of the answer to the ironic and puzzling situation where continuous economic growth hardly makes a dent on mass hunger and poverty.

In the latest survey conducted by the poll group Social Weather Stations in the last quarter of 2008, 52 percent of Filipinos or a total of about 9.4 million families rated themselves as poor, while 24 percent said they straddled the border between poor and not poor. Another SWS survey showed the figure on hunger scaling a new high of 23.7 percent during the last quarter of last year. That means that 4.3 million households experienced involuntary hunger in the previous three months. The percentage of hungry people is not only higher than the 21.5 percent in the third quarter of 2007 but, more disturbingly, it was 11 percentage points above the 10-year average of 12.6 percent.

So where did all the fruits of several successive years of economic growth go? Last year was of course a bad year, with the growth in gross domestic product estimate to be less than 4.0 percent. But 2007 was a very good year—the best in three decades, in fact, measured in terms of GDP growth rate at 7.2 percent. And yet September 2007 saw the hunger incidence shoot up to a record high. Apparently, the government has not been doing enough to redistribute the new wealth created by economic growth. What it has done instead is make the rich grow richer and the poor grow in number. And this is because it pours most of its resources into areas that are already more developed and better off.

The World Bank's country director for the Philippines, Bert Hofman, has pointed one way to achieve a more balanced allocation of resources and ultimately development: revise the way the internal revenue allotments (IRA) are distributed among local government units to favor the less developed towns and regions. Under the present system of sharing, the IRA, which adds up to 40 percent of the national government's internal revenue collection, is divided among the provinces (23 percent), municipalities (34 percent), cities (23 percent) and barangays (20 percent). The share of a province, city or town depends on its land area and population, giving the more developed places, which are naturally more heavily populated, larger shares. The result is the deepening of the disparity among local government units and the scandalous misallocation of resources which sees some rich cities building marble barangay halls or prettifying sidewalks at a cost of tens of millions, while poor towns cannot even afford to hire doctors or nurses.

The obvious solution is to give poorer towns bigger IRAs, and richer cities less or none at all, as Hoffman has suggested. This can be achieved by amending the Local Government Code, a task our lawmakers should address quickly if they intend to reverse the gross inequalities that are the principal source of disaffection and discord—even violence— among the Filipino people.

© Philippine Daily Inquirer

Humabon's conversion wasn't for religion

Last Friday we had the annual feast of the Black Nazarene of Quiapo. We are told the image was brought to the Philippines from Mexico, and one wonders if it was originally black or became black with age and with the soot of candle smoke or incense. I don't know what type of wood was used to make the image. A detailed scientific study of a splinter can probably tell us the true age of the Nazareno and, perhaps, the place in Mexico it came from. January fiestas start with the Nazareno, an image of the suffering Christ bent and tired from carrying that heavy cross. Devotees are predominantly male and they do come in force on Jan. 9. The women prefer the off-fiesta season, when Quiapo Church is more approachable even when jam-packed on a Friday. As a boy, I remember seeing old ladies wearing different colors at appointed days: on Fridays, they wore purple with a golden sash like the Nazareno; on Tuesdays, they wore brown with a white tasseled belt with three or four knots dangling from their waists for the Franciscan San Antonio de Padua. There was a day for white with a blue sash for Our Lady of Lourdes. There must have been a particular costume and color to go with the saint of the day, but we seldom see devotees in costume these days.

Looking Back

By AMBETH OCAMPO

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Mike Tan can probably explain why in January we start off with the fiesta of the Nazarene, the adult Christ for adult men, while all of the Sundays in January are dedicated to the Christ Child, or the Santo Niño, who is venerated in Cebu, Panay, Tondo, San Beda College on Mendiola Street, and all over the country. There are big fiestas dedicated to the Santo Niño like the Sinulog in Cebu, the Ati-atihan in Aklan and so many other places that take the fiesta as an excuse for noise, merriment and street-dancing. What is it in an image that we find comforting? Why do some pray to the Black Nazarene and others to the Santo Niño? Which Christ is easier to approach for favors, the suffering adult or the child that looks and is dressed up like a doll? No wonder the good archbishop of Manila tried in vain to "purify" the fiesta by reminding the deaf flock to see beyond the folk image and see Christ who should be our guide in life.

Historically, the image of the Santo Niño venerated in Cebu is the oldest image in the Philippines, unless this is challenged by the image of the Virgin of Ermita that was also found or "recovered" in the islands by the Legaspi expedition in the 16th century. The image of the Santo Niño was presented to the wife of Rajah Humabon when she was baptized in 1521. She was shown a crucifix and an image of the Virgin Mary but the Queen of Cebu, who was baptized and given the name Juana, was attracted to the Santo Niño and asked for it. Magellan was happy to part with it and after the Battle of Mactan, the Santo Niño remained in Cebu and was found by one of Legazpi's men in 1565. We will go into the historical details about the Santo Niño in a succeeding column because when I re-read the account of the conversion of Humabon, as narrated by Antonio Pigafetta, chronicler of the Magellan expedition, I realized there was nothing religious about it at all. Magellan threatened the "heathens" who refused to be converted with bodily harm; on the other hand, he promised aid and power to the king so that the latter could subdue his enemies.

The mass conversion was held on Sunday, April 14, 1521. The converted were given new names: Humabon became Carlos, in honor of the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V. (The same man who was Carlos I of Spain is the same "Carlos Primero" and "Emperador" we associate with brandy rather than history today.) His wife was christened Juana in honor of Charles V's mother, who is better known in history as "Juana la Loca" or "Joanna the Mad," and the poor queen of Cebu didn't know this bit of the story. Kolambu was named Juan and his wife, Isabel. Two others were named Fernando, one in honor of Ferdinand Magellan, the other in honor of Fernando, the son of Charles V.

Pigafetta described Magellan and Humabon embracing and later sitting on chairs of red and violet with chieftains and other notables on cushions: "The captain told the king through the interpreter that he thanked God for inspiring him to become a Christian; and that (now) he would more easily conquer his enemies than before. The king replied that he wished to become a Christian, but that some of his chiefs did not wish to obey.… Then our captain had all the chiefs of the king called, and told them that, unless they obeyed the king as their king, he would have them killed, and would give their possessions to the king.… The captain told the king that he was going to Spain but that he would return again with so many forces, that he would make him the greatest king of those regions, as he had been the first to express a determination to become a Christian."

Then a large cross was erected there and Magellan taught the king and the converts how to make the sign of the cross and venerate the cross. Everyone complied. Now what happened to these "instant Christians" after Magellan and his men were massacred by Lapulapu in Mactan? Rereading Pigafetta tells us how oversimplified this episode is in our history textbooks. To understand the complexity of history is to understand not just the past but the present as well.

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu.

Maharlika – Samu't Sari

Mr. and Mrs. Frank and Rell Villagomez offer a toast to their daughter's Sweet 16 birthday celebration.

Andreau Galvez escorts debutant Louise Villagomez for the start of the cotillion.

Louise Villagomez looks like the princess that she is as she celebrates her 16th birthday on Jan. 14, 2009 at the Hibiscus Hall of the Fiesta Resort and Spa Saipan.

Louise celebrates her Sweet 16

Photos by REY BELGADO

Louise Villagomez celebrated her 16th birthday on Jan. 14, 2009, with a grand bash at the Hibiscus Hall of the Fiesta Resort and Spa Saipan, complete with a cotillon, candle girls and candle boys, and a toast befitting the season's debutante.

Here are some pictures from the event:

The 16 Roses boys have their picture taken.

The 16 Candles girls gather for a photo with debutante Louise Villagomez and escort Andreau Galvez.

Party host Hapi Gabriel poses with Sweet 16 celebrant Louise Villagomez and her escort, Andreau Galvez.

Che Javier strikes a pose with the florist Philip Canuto of Island Florals, hairstylist Eddie Uy and designer Monique Espiritu.

Party host Hapi Gabriel, third from left, is seen here enjoying the moment with the 16 Roses boys Kevin, Alfred, Daniel, Geza, and Aila Olarte.

Young Style

True tales of the White House

By VALERIE STRAUSS
(C) 2009, THE WASHINGTON POST

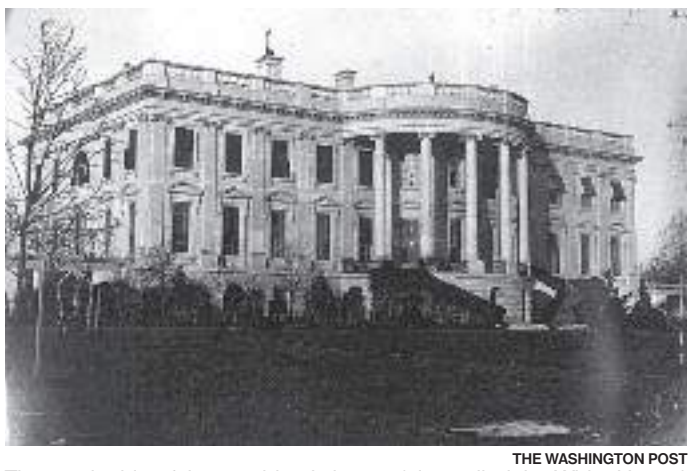
You've been hearing a lot about the life of our next president, Barack Obama, who will be No. 44 after he takes the oath next Tuesday. Here are some things you might not know about some of the men who came before him as president of the United States.

1. George Washington (1789-1797) did not do many things people said he did. He did not wear a wig, though many men did in those days. He had false teeth, but they were not wooden. They were made of lead, wire, bone, ivory and both human and animal teeth. You can see them and many more of his possessions at Mount Vernon.

3. Thomas Jefferson (1801-1809) composed the words he wanted written on his tombstone. He said he wanted to be remembered as the author of the Declaration of Independence and an important Virginia statute about religious freedom, and as the founder of the University of Virginia. But he didn't mention he had been president.

Jefferson and John Adams (1797-1801), the second president, had a complicated history. They were friends, then enemies and then friends again. They both died on July 4, 1826. Adams' family reported that his last words were "Thomas Jefferson survives"; he didn't know Jefferson had died hours earlier.

4. James Madison (1809-1817) was the main author of the Constitution. He was also the shortest president, at 5 feet 4 inches tall. And he weighed the least, just 100 pounds.



THE WASHINGTON POST
The south side of the president's house (also called the White House) in Washington, probably taken in winter about 1846

THE WASHINGTON POST
True tales of the White House: From left, Grover Cleveland (1885-1889 and 1893-1897), the only one to be counted twice in the numbering of the presidents because his two terms weren't back-to-back; William Taft (1909-1913), the largest president, weighing more than 300 pounds; and Calvin Coolidge (1923-1929), who had a pet raccoon named Rebecca.

Presidential Facts

(c) 2009, The Washington Post

Salary: George Washington earned $25,000 a year; the president now earns $400,000 a year.

Religion: All Christian.

Terms: Eight of 43 presidents died in office. Richard Nixon was the only president to resign, in 1974, during the Watergate scandal.

Shortest term: William Henry Harrison, ninth president, died in 1841 one month after he was sworn into office. He had pneumonia.

Longest term: Franklin Delano Roosevelt was elected four times and served 12 years before dying at age 63 in 1945. After Roosevelt, Congress set a limit for the president of two four-year terms.

Oldest on taking office: Ronald Reagan, age 69.

Youngest on taking office: Theodore Roosevelt, age 42.

6. John Quincy Adams (1825-1829) liked to swim without any clothes on at 5 a.m. in the Potomac River. Once someone stole his clothes, and he asked a passing boy to retrieve a new set from the White House.

7. Andrew Jackson (1829-1837) was the first president to ride on a train. He had a fierce temper and was involved in several duels, including one in which he killed a man who had insulted Jackson's wife.

22 and 24. Grover Cleveland (1885-1889 and 1893-1897) is the only person to be counted twice in the numbering of the presidents because he won two terms that weren't back-to-back.

27. William H. Taft (1909-1913) was the largest president ever, weighing more than 300 pounds. After getting stuck in a White House bathtub, he had a special one installed that was 7 feet long and 41 inches wide.

28. Woodrow Wilson (1913-1921) was believed to have dyslexia, a learning disability that makes it difficult to read and write, but became president of Princeton University and the United States.

30. Calvin Coolidge (1923-1929) was given a raccoon for Thanksgiving dinner but turned the animal into a pet and named her Rebecca. Coolidge used to put Rebecca on a leash and take her for a walk.

40. Ronald Reagan (1981-1989)was a movie actor before becoming a politician. In one of his movies, "Bedtime for Bonzo," his co-star was a chimpanzee.

War in the Middle East

By VALERIE STRAUSS
(C) 2009, THE WASHINGTON POST

As you read this, kids in at least 30 places around the world are living in war zones. The conflicts you may have heard the most about are in Iraq and Afghanistan, because U.S. soldiers are fighting in both countries.

Now a new war has captured the world's attention, one in the troubled Middle East. Children on both sides of the conflict are in the middle.

The latest fighting is between the forces of the nation of Israel and an organization called Hamas, which stands for "Islamic Resistance Movement" and has vowed to destroy Israel.

The war is unfolding in the Gaza Strip, an area of towns, villages and farmland about twice the size of Washington, D.C. The Gaza Strip is bordered by Israel, Egypt and the Mediterranean Sea.

Controlled by Hamas, the area has about 1.5 million Palestinians living in it, about 80 percent of whom live in poverty.

To understand this new war, you need to know that Israel was created in 1948 to be a homeland for Jewish people after World War II, when millions of them were killed by the Nazis.

Many Arabs in the Middle East believe the land to create Israel was unfairly taken from Arabs who were living there, people called Palestinians. Several wars between Israelis and Arabs have been fought since then. One of them happened in 1967. Israel's army, under threat of Arab attack, took over territory that the Palestinians see as their future country. Gaza is part of that territory.

But all Palestinians do not agree on how big their country should be or who should run it. Some want it to be created next to Israel in Gaza and other land Israel has kept its army in since 1967. Others, such as Hamas, believe what is now Israel should be part of a Palestinian country. Hamas is fighting in part to take control of the land.

Israel, the United States and other countries consider Hamas to be a terrorist group because of the way it fights Israel: using suicide bombers, people who blow themselves up and kill innocent people as well as themselves. Hamas also fires rockets from Gaza into Israel.

But to many Palestinians, Hamas is a political party that runs hospitals and schools in Gaza, and so is seen by many Arabs as a defender of Palestinian rights.

From about June to December last year, there was relative calm on the Gaza-Israel border because both sides had agreed not to attack each other. Then in December, Hamas suddenly started firing rockets into Israel again.

Israel's powerful army launched an invasion of Gaza so, the Israeli government said, its soldiers could put an end to Hamas' ability to fire rockets.

Since the fighting began, more than 800 Palestinians have died and several thousand have been wounded. Hamas says many of them have been women and children. Thirteen Israelis, including six soldiers, have died.

Palestinians say the large number of dead and wounded shows that Israel is attacking them with too much force. Israel says a big reason so many Palestinians have died is that Hamas puts fighters and military equipment in the middle of areas packed with innocent people. So when Israel targets those fighters, civilians get caught in the fighting.

Other governments, including the United States, are working hard to get both sides to stop the war. But the fighting is very emotional because it involves issues of religion, land, identity and survival. That is what makes the Israeli-Palestinian conflict so difficult—and why peace has been so difficult to achieve.

By FRED BOWEN
Special to The Washington Post

Bowen is an author of sports novels for kids.

Through the years, presidents got game

AP
In this April 29, 2008 file photo, The University of North Carolina's Jack Wooten, right, pressures then-Democratic presidential hopeful Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill., during a basketball game in Chapel Hill, N.C.

Barack Obama will be sworn in as president of the United States on Tuesday. Obama will make history as the first African-American to become president, but he is also another presidential first.

He will be the first basketball-playing president.

The president-elect is a dedicated hoopster. He played on his high school team in Hawaii, where he was known as Barry O'Bomber because of his long jump shots. Obama continued to play three-on-three games throughout the presidential campaign to stay in shape and have fun. There are plans to install an indoor court at the White House so he can keep working on his game.

You don't have to like sports to be president, but many presidents have enjoyed sports. Our current president, George W. Bush, is a big baseball fan. He owned a Major League Baseball team, the Texas Rangers, before he became president, and he hosted T-ball games on the White House lawn.

Bush's father, President George H.W. Bush (president from 1989 to 1993), was captain of his college baseball team at Yale University. The two Bush presidents enjoy other sports, including tennis and golf.

President Bill Clinton (1993-2001) jogged and was an avid golfer. Several presidents have played golf, but no one played as much as President Dwight D. Eisenhower (1953-1961). According to the book "Eisenhower and Golf: A President at Play," by David Sowell, Eisenhower played almost 900 rounds of golf during his eight years as president.

President Richard Nixon (1969-1974) played football in high school and was such a big football fan that he suggested plays for the Washington Redskins while he was president.

The best football player, and probably the best athlete, to live in the White House was President Gerald Ford (1974-1977). Ford played center and linebacker for the University of Michigan in 1932 and 1933, when the Wolverines won two national titles.

President Theodore Roosevelt (1901-1909) was probably the first president to emphasize the importance of sports and physical activity. Because he had often been sick as a child, Roosevelt believed in what he called the strenuous life. He hiked, rowed, played tennis and was an expert horseman. He even boxed when he was governor of New York, and as president.

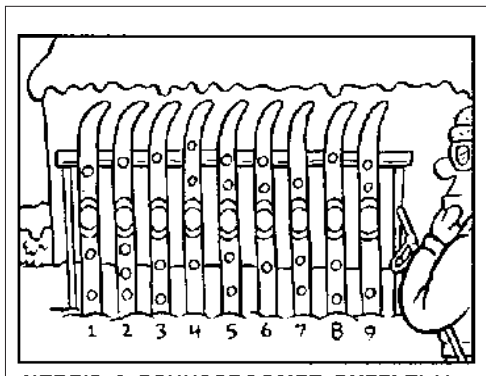
According to author Betsy Harvey Kraft, who wrote "Theodore Roosevelt: Champion of the American Spirit," Roosevelt also loved football but worried that the early college games were too rough. So as president, he brought together coaches from the top colleges to enforce stricter safety standards for the game.

Many people feel that as president, Obama will give the country more hope. He will definitely give America more hoops!

Presidential Athletics Fact

(c) 2009, The Washington Post

A number of U.S. presidents were wrestlers. George Washington won a county championship in Virginia at age 18, and Abraham Lincoln was a champion wrestler at age 21 in Illinois.



Illustrated by David Coulson

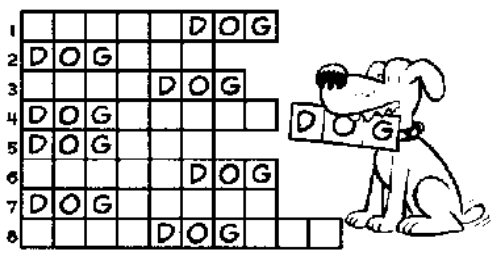
HERE'S A SCHUSSBOOMER PUZZLE! You have one minute to pick out a matching pair of skis in the rack pictured above.

Answer: Skis 3 and 8.

Junior Whirl

by Charles Barry Townsend

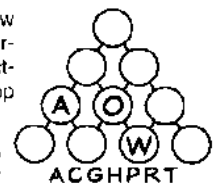
DON'T ROLL OVER ON THIS ONE!



A CHEESY PROBLEM! Cheese is made from the curds of sour milk pressed together until solid and allowed to ripen. What cheese is made backward?

Answer: EDAM cheese is MADE backward. (I told you it was a cheesy problem.)

CHAIN REACTION! Take the seven letters printed below our diagram and place them in the circles so that eight four-letter words can be read, top to bottom, along the connecting lines. All the words will begin with the letter in the top circle.



Answers: Top to bottom, left to right: Chat, chap, chop, chow, crop, crow, craw, crag.

It's time to "unleash" your word power. Each of the eight words above contains the word "dog." Using the following hints, can you fetch them in five minutes?

1. Popular fast food.
2. To be stubborn; tenacious.
3. Shamefaced or guilty.
4. Type of air combat.
5. Type of golfing fairway.
6. At a disadvantage in a struggle.
7. Crude, humorous verse.
8. Trivial, pointless work.

Answers: 1. Chilidog. 2. Dogged. 3. Hangdog. 4. Dogfight. 5. Dog leg. 6. Underdog. 7. Doggerel. 8. Boondoggle.

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What about tomatoes?

Q. In your Dec. 8 column, you listed foods that were not good for dogs, among them avocados and tomatoes. My Chihuahua loves avocados, tomatoes, broccoli and many other veggies (without salt, of course). Please tell me why avocados and tomatoes are not good for them.—Diana, via e-mail

Q. I recently read your article on foods for dogs to avoid, and was curious about the tomatoes. I raise miniature pinschers, and one day as I was cutting up tomatoes I gave them some. I had two tomato vines out in my backyard and for the rest of the summer I did not get any more of them, as the dogs ate them as soon as they would start to ripen. It never hurt them at all. I have heard of chocolate but never tomatoes. —MaryAnn W., via e-mail

A. In dogs, tomato plants (leaves and stems) can cause tremors and heart arrhythmia (an irregular, rapid or "fluttering" pulse); the fruit itself is not listed as toxic by the Humane Society of the United States, but I would keep dogs out of the tomato patch at all times and feed them very limited amounts of the fruit.

Avocados can cause breathing difficulties and fluid accumulation in the chest, abdomen and heart. All parts of the avocado—the fruit, the pit and the plant—are toxic. This fruit is also toxic to cats, birds, mice, rabbits, goats, horses and cattle.

A more complete list of toxic foods is available at the Humane Society Web site at http://www.hsus.org.

■ ■ ■

Send your tips, questions and comments to Paw's Corner, c/o King Features Weekly Service, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475, or e-mail them to pawscorner@hotmail.com.

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Strange BUT TRUE

By Samantha Weaver

■ It was Canadian-born author and educator Laurence J. Peter who made the following sage observation: "The man who says he is willing to meet you halfway is usually a poor judge of distance."

■ Successful inventor and businessman Thomas Alva Edison received only three months of formal education, at a public school in Michigan.

■ Those who study such things claim that the human skull can be compressed by 10 percent before the bone cracks. It begs the question, though: How did they test the hypothesis?

■ Only male mockingbirds sing; the females of the species are silent.

■ In 1740, a judge in an ecclesiastical court in France tried a cow—yes, an actual bovine—for sorcery. The poor animal was found guilty and sentenced to hang from the neck until dead.

■ If you're like the average American, you consumed more than 250 eggs last year.

■ The first photograph of a United States citizen was taken in 1839. The subject was Samuel F.B. Morse, a painter who also happened to be the inventor of a single-wire telegraph system and developer of the Morse Code.

■ You've probably never heard the term "univocalic"; it's one of those specialized words used by those who study the English language. The word refers to a piece of writing that uses only one of the vowels. "Strenghthlessness," for example, is the longest one-word univocalic in English.

■ Experts say that in the United States, approximately 3.5 billion tons of soil are lost every year to erosion. That's enough to fill a freight train so long that it would circle the globe 19 times at the Equator.

■ ■ ■

Thought for the Day:
"There are no wise few. Every aristocracy that has ever existed has behaved, in all essential points, exactly like a small mob."—G.K. Chesterton

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MAGIC MAZE ● WORDS TAKEN WITH A "PILL"

T J Y H E C C Z X U S Q N L S
J W G R E S N A C Z X V T R R
P N O O O L N O P J H E A C Y
A Y W L V L V I L I T L R R P
N L K I L E L E K L L G A E C
B Z X W U I R I G I I L S R P
Y A W L L I P S P A L P A O M
L J I C A T E R P I L L A R G
E D A L L I P A P I B L I P Y
A Y X W U Y R U B S L L I P S
X O B L L I P E N A L L I P S

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions - forward, backward, up, down and diagonally.

Capillary	Papillon	Pillory	Spillikins
Caterpillar	Pillage	Pillsbury	Spills
Overspill	Pillars	Pupillary	Spillway
Papilla	Pillbox	Spillane	

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GO FIGURE! by Linda Thistle

The idea of Go Figure is to arrive at the figures given at the bottom and right-hand columns of the diagram by following the arithmetic signs in the order they are given (that is, from left to right and top to bottom). Use only the numbers below the diagram to complete its blank squares and use each of the nine numbers only once.

DIFFICULTY: ★

★ Moderate ★★ Difficult
★★★ GO FIGURE!

	x		−		26
÷		x		−	
	+		x		24
x		+		x	
	x		−		28
28		24		24	

1 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 9

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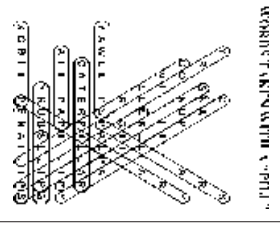
MAGIC MAZE ANSWER



GO FIGURE ANSWER

26	9	−	5	7
			×	÷
24	9	×	3	1
	×		+	×
28	8	−	9	4

Box puppet 'play' in three easy steps

Turn a dreary winter's day into a "play day" filled with whimsical box puppets your family can make in three easy steps. Pick characters from a favorite book and retell a story "puppet show" style. Or mix and match characters from several books. You might even create some puppets that look like family members, for an even livelier troupe. Use extra props and make funny voices and sound effects for a memorable performance.

Before you begin making your puppets, collect a few empty food boxes, such as single-portion cereal boxes, which are quite easy for younger children to manipulate. As your cast of puppet characters grows, it's definitely fun to use boxes in a range of shapes and sizes.

Here's what you need for your puppet workshop:

■ 1 single-portion cereal box, paper lining removed and open end glued shut. (For a larger puppet, use a standard-size cereal box.)
■ Poster paint and brushes
■ Markers
■ Construction paper
■ Glue and scissors
■ Odd and ends, such as felt, ping-pong balls, cotton balls and yarn for beards and hair.

Here's the fun:

With the front of the box facing you, draw a horizontal line around the middle of the box. An adult should cut along the line on the front and two narrow sides of the box. Do not cut the line on the back of the box. Instead, make a fold on that line so you can bend back the two connected halves of the box. Insert your fingers and thumb in the openings to test moving the "mouth" of the puppet.

Paint the outside of the box or cover it with construction paper. If you are making safari-style puppets, you might want to use adhesive-backed paper in tiger, lion or zebra prints.

Add craft supplies to represent the appearance of a book character or person in your family or neighborhood. Glue on ping-pong balls or plastic milk-jug lids for eyes. Make a dot in the center of each one with a marker. Add yarn or cotton balls for hair, and felt or craft foam for ears. Don't forget to make a tongue and glue it inside where the box opens and closes. Draw teeth or lips on the outside of the box. Add other details to create a distinct personality.

■ ■ ■

Donna Erickson's award-winning television series "Donna's Day" airs on public television nationwide. Visit www.donnasday.com to find out when it airs on your local PBS station and to sign up for Donna's e-newsletter.

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Life & Style

Redford's excited over fade out on Bush years

PARK CITY, Utah (AP)—Robert Redford is happy to see the end-credits rolling on the George W. Bush administration.

President-elect Barack Obama's inauguration Tuesday falls in the middle of Redford's Sundance Film Festival, which the actor has occasionally used as a platform to criticize Bush in past years.

"I'm personally excited just because I'm glad to see the gang that couldn't shoot straight get out of there. I'm glad to see them gone," Redford said Thursday at a news conference hours before the opening of the 11-day festival. You've got a lame-duck guy going out, but he sure has done a lot of quacking in the last while. So therefore, the sooner they're gone, the better, and therefore, I'm very excited by the change that's coming."

Redford said he hopes federal funds for the arts might eventually rise under the Obama administration, adding that the National Endowment for the Arts has been hobbled by politics.

Redford

"They were fighting the political machine of the extreme right that saw art as some kind of threat," Redford said. "So I think that's going to change. What I would like to see is, a country like ours should certainly be subsidizing, a little bit more than it is, art in general. Other countries do. So I would certainly like to see more coming out of the NEA. They've cut it down to the bone. There's practically nothing left."

The festival is presenting 118 feature-length films, starting with Thursday night's opening premiere "Mary and Max," director Adam Elliot's clay-animation tale whose voice cast is led by Philip Seymour Hoffman and Toni Collette.

The lineup of independent films includes Michael and Mark Polish's "Manure," with Billy Bob Thornton and Tea Leoni in the comic tale of a fertilizer company in crisis; Armando Iannucci's political satire "In the Loop," with James Gandolfini; Greg Mottola's 1980s flashback "Adventureland," with Jesse Eisenberg and Kristen Stewart; and Marc Webb's "500 Days of Summer," with Zooey Deschanel and Joseph Gordon-Levitt.

Redford, whose Sundance Institute for independent cinema has overseen the festival for 25 years, shared some advice for anyone aiming to break into filmmaking.

End to Bush's 'Great Moments' on Letterman

NEW YORK (AP)—The end of the Bush administration also marks the end of "Great Moments in Presidential Speeches," an enduring feature on David Letterman's "Late Show" that pokes fun at the president's less eloquent moments.

"Late Show" writer Tom Ruprecht may remember it as the time he was sprung—from hours spent in his office watching Bush speeches to find those magic moments. Friday's show will feature a retrospective of the best "Great Moments," as when the president talked of the right hand not knowing what the left was doing, while motioning with the incorrect hand.

Ruprecht was something of a student of Bush's speaking style. "I first noticed that he would often say things in the cadence of a joke, but it wasn't a joke," he said, "but the audience would laugh."

One day he heard Bush talking about a triple cheeseburger and thought it was something odd for a president to say. He thought of contrasting the comment with some of the memorable lines delivered by former presidents, and a segment was born.

It went over so well that he followed the first "Great Moment" on March 30, 2006 with some 377 more. And that doesn't even count the dozens that didn't make it on the show because they were cut for time.

"It was the gift that kept on giving," said Eric Stangel, co-head writer for Letterman.

2 actors inducted into Texas Cowboy Hall of Fame

FORT WORTH, Texas (AP)—Better known for portraying on-screen cowboys, Tommy Lee Jones and Barry Corbin were among six people inducted into the Texas Cowboy Hall of Fame on Thursday night.

"By God, y'all are cowboys too," Gov. Rick Perry told the actors as the crowd of about 600 laughed.

Jones

Jones, an eighth-generation Texan who raises cattle and polo ponies on his 3,000-acre ranch, said he had won many awards but had never felt they were about him.

"This might be the first time that I've taken an award personally," Jones said. "This is the first time in all my long years of award-winning that I wish my granddad could be here."

Jones, 62, won the Academy Award and the Golden Globe for best supporting actor in 1993's "The Fugitive." His other awards include an Emmy for the 1982 made-for-TV movie "The Executioner's Song." His films include "Coal Miner's Daughter," "JFK," "Batman Forever" and "Men in Black."

Corbin, a Lamesa native who now lives and ranches in Fort Worth, was getting the 2009 Rick Smith Spirit of Texas Award.

Corbin, 68, was nominated for an Emmy twice for his work on the early 1990s TV series "Northern Exposure" role and has appeared in numerous TV series, including "Dallas," "Reba," "The Closer" and "One Tree Hill." Corbin's films include "Urban Cowboy" and "WarGames."

"An award like this is a once-in-a lifetime deal because it is recognition from my people," Corbin said. "A lot of these awards are for saying lines good."

Both Jones and Corbin were in the 2007 best-picture Oscar winner "No Country for Old Men" and "In the Valley of Elah," as well as the TV miniseries "Lonesome Dove."

The other 2009 Texas Cowboy Hall of Fame inductees: Tyler Magnus, a nine-time National Finals Rodeo qualifier and former winner in team roping who stars in his own TV show; Rope Myers, a former Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association world champion steer wrestler; Ken Welch, a former champion saddle bronc rider; and the late Jim Bob Altizer, a former Rodeo Cowboy Association calf-roping champion and Pro Rodeo Hall of Fame and National Cowboy Hall of Fame member.

Amy Poehler ready for a sitcom change of pace

UNIVERSAL CITY, Calif. (AP)—Coming off her final and triumphant "Saturday Night Live" season, Amy Poehler says she's looking forward to switching gears in a new NBC comedy.

Poehler told a meeting of the Television Critics Association that she's excited about the idea of being able to "turn the volume down a little bit and sit with a character."

Poehler

In the mockumentary-style comedy, Poehler plays a mid-level bureaucrat in an Indiana city parks and recreation department who's looking to get ahead.

The still-untitled series debuts 8:30 p.m. EST April 9.

Poehler's portrayal of Hillary Rodham Clinton opposite Tina Fey's Sarah Palin on "SNL" was a highlight of the show last year.

The new series isn't intended as a satire on national politics but instead offers a comedic take on how government works in an American town, said Michael Schur, who's executive producer along with Greg Daniels (of "The Office," NBC's other mockumentary-style comedy).

Poehler's character, Leslie Knope, finds her love of the democratic process tested as she faces defensive government workers, selfish residents and real estate developers.

Poehler was asked if she has any hard feelings about the attention being lavished on Fey, both for the Palin impersonation and for "30 Rock," Fey's Emmy- and Golden Globe-winning NBC comedy.

Does Poehler ever want to say, "I'll show her"?

"Then I turn around and wake her up and we have breakfast together," Poehler responded, with a smile.

Poehler, who co-starred with Fey in last year's movie "Baby Mama," had a baby last year with husband Will Arnett—an event that earned a musical tribute from her "Saturday Night Live" castmates. Poehler called the gesture "awesome" and recalled watching it from her hospital bed the October night her son was born.

"He was conveniently born at 6 p.m. so I could watch it live," Poehler said.

Her reaction: "Uncontrollable sobbing."

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Hotel For Dogs
Friday 4:00 7:00 9:35
Saturday 1:00 4:00 7:00 9:35
Sunday 1:00 4:00 7:00
Mon and Tues 4:00 7:00
Emma Roberts, Don Cheadle
Comedy, Children • Rated PG
Synopsis
Andi and her younger brother, Bruce, live in a strictly no-pets household and are fast running out of ways to keep their perpetually hungry dog, Friday, under wraps. When they accidentally stumble on an abandoned hotel that is already home to a couple of resourceful strays, Andi has an idea. She taps Bruce's mechanical genius for turning everyday objects into mechanical marvels, and, with the help of their friends in the neighborhood, transform the down-and-out hotel into a magical dog paradise--not only for Friday, but for every stray they can find.

My Bloody Valentine
Friday 4:30 7:15 9:55
Saturday 1:25 4:30 7:15 9:55
Sunday 1:25 4:30 7:15
Mon and Tues 4:30 7:15
Jaime King, Tom Atkins
Horror • Rated R
Synopsis
Ten years ago, a tragedy changed the town of Harmony forever. Tom Hanniger, an inexperienced coal miner, caused an accident in the tunnels that trapped and killed five men and sent the only survivor, Harry Warden, into a permanent coma. Then, exactly one year later, on Valentine's Day, Harry Warden woke up--and brutally murdered twenty-two people with a pickaxe before being killed. Ten years later, Tom Hanniger returns to Harmony on Valentine's Day, still haunted by the deaths he caused.

Paul Blart, Mall Cop
Friday 4:20 7:05 10:00
Saturday 1:05 4:20 7:05 10:00
Sunday 1:05 4:20 7:05
Mon and Tues 4:20 7:05
Kevin James, Jayma Mays
Comedy • Rated PG
Synopsis
A single, suburban dad tries to make ends meet as a security officer at a New Jersey mall. It's a job he takes very seriously, though no one else does. When Santa's helpers at the mall stage a coup, shutting down the megaplex and taking hostages (Paul's daughter and sweetheart among them), Jersey's most formidable mall cop will have to become a real cop to save the day.

★ ★ ★

Bride Wars
Friday 4:15 7:30 9:30
Saturday 1:10 4:15 7:30 9:30
Sunday 1:10 4:15 7:30
Mon and Tues 4:15 7:30
Kate Hudson, Anne Hathaway
Romantic Comedy • Rated PG

Unborn
Friday 4:25 7:20 9:50
Saturday 1:30 4:25 7:20 9:50
Sunday 1:30 4:25 7:20
Mon and Tues 4:25 7:20
Gary Oldman, Odette Yustman
Thriller, Supernatural • Rated PG 13

Gran Torino
Friday 4:10 7:10 9:40
Saturday 1:15 4:10 7:10 9:40
Sunday 1:15 4:10 7:10
Mon and Tues 4:10 7:10
Clint Eastwood, Bee Vang
Action, Drama, Thriller • Rated PG R

Bedtime Stories
Friday 4:05 7:25 9:45
Saturday 1:20 4:05 7:25 9:45
Sunday 1:20 4:05 7:25
Mon and Tues 4:05 7:25
Adam Sandler, Keri Russell
Comedy, Adventure • Rated PG

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AP

In this March 28, 2007, file photo, actor Johnny Knoxville poses as he arrives at the Los Angeles premiere of "Blades of Glory," in the Hollywood area of Los Angeles.

Knoxville detained for inert grenade at airport

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Authorities detained Johnny Knoxville on Thursday for allegedly bringing an inert grenade into Los Angeles International Airport. After security screeners spotted the grenade in the "Jackass" star's carry-on luggage, a bomb squad determined it lacked a firing pin or explosive. Police say Knoxville was later released and allowed to board an American Airlines flight to Miami.

Prosecutors will decide whether to charge the 38-year-old with bringing a prohibited item into a secure area of the airport, a misdemeanor. An e-mail to Knoxville's publicist was not immediately returned.

Knoxville, whose real name is Philip John Clapp, told officers the grenade was a prop he forgot to remove from his bag, Airport spokeswoman Nancy Castles said.

Judge allows access in Los Angeles gate squabble

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The multimillion-dollar battle between the haves and the have-even-mores over who gets to use access gates to enter their luminary-studded enclave is over—for now.

A Los Angeles County Superior Court judge has ruled that "guests and invitees" of South Beverly Park can now use the gates at North Beverly Park, ending an almost three-year dispute.

The exclusive quarrel erupted in 2006 when residents of 64-home North Beverly Park, who include Denzel Washington, Reba McEntire, Eddie Murphy and media moguls Haim Saban and Sumner Redstone, barred nannies, gardeners and others traveling to adjoining South Beverly Park from using northern gates, citing security costs and concerns.

That meant the visitors had to detour seven miles to get to the 16 homes on the southern end.

The southerners, including Earvin "Magic" Johnson, Samuel L. Jackson and producer Richard Zanuck, sued, saying the policy was arbitrary, capricious and "downright unneighborly."

A judge this week agreed, but North Beverly Park attorney Jeffrey Huron says he plans to file objections.

"There is no reason why (southern) guests and invitees should not have to use the public streets like all of the other residents in the neighborhood that do not live in North Beverly Park," he said.

South Beverly Park attorney Steve Goldberg says he's filing a claim for damages, plus $2 million in legal fees.

ENTERTAINMENT TIDBITS

Audience holds steady up for 'American Idol'

NEW YORK (AP)—The second night of "American Idol" delivered an unexpected gift to Fox. Its audience was virtually the same as the first night (30.4 million on Tuesday, 30.3 million on Wednesday), and ratings were up among the younger viewers about whom Fox cares the most. Fox attributes the development to good word of mouth about the first night. For the past four years, the audience declined from the first night to the second—by 3 million viewers in 2008. "We're thrilled," said Mike Darnell, chief of alternative programming at Fox. Darnell said it's an early indication that viewers are embracing Kara DioGuardi, the new fourth judge, and Fox's effort to make the tryout shows seem less harsh. "You can talk and talk about the creative changes," he said. "What you need is the word of mouth."

Sundance premieres find buyers as festival opens

PARK CITY, Utah (AP)—Even before the official start of the Sundance Film Festival, there has been action on the acquisitions front for films playing at the independent-cinema showcase. HBO has picked up U.S. television rights to the documentary "Burma VJ," which uses footage from underground video journalists capturing the 2007 uprising of Buddhist monks against the Myanmar government. The film by Danish director Anders Ostergaard has its North American premiere Saturday after debuting last fall at documentary festivals in Europe. Sony Pictures Classics has bought North American rights to "Rudo y Cursi," a hit in Mexico that premieres at Sundance on Friday. Directed by Carlos Cuaron, the comic drama reunites "Y Tu Mama Tambien" co-stars Gael Garcia Bernal and Diego Luna as brothers who wind up as soccer rivals.

NBC announces '30 Rock,' 'The Office' renewals

UNIVERSAL CITY, Calif. (AP)—NBC is renewing Tina Fey's "30 Rock" for the 2009-10 season, along with "The Office" and "The Biggest Loser."

Besides the return of the comedies and the weight-loss reality show, NBC announced Thursday that it has set a premiere date for Amy Poehler's new comedy, a mockumentary about local government. The show, yet to get a title, will debut 8:30 p.m. EST April 9.

"Southland," a new police drama from "ER" executive producer John Wells, also will debut April 9, at 10 p.m. EST.

NBC said that fans of "ER" will get three more episodes than previously announced before the show ends for good, a total of 23. That will push its two-hour finale to April 2.

Angela Bromstad, new president of prime-time entertainment for NBC, weighed in on the fate of other series at a meeting of the Television Critics Association.

Despite a drop in ratings, "Heroes" is secure, Bromstad said. The sci-fi drama, in its third season, "may have taken on too much in terms of characters and multiple story lines," she added.

Bromstad said the network feels "very strongly" about "Life," "Friday Night Lights" and "Lipstick Jungle." She denied reports that "Lipstick Jungle," which stars Brooke Shields, has been canceled.

The network executive's enthusiasm doesn't extend to the new sitcom "Kath & Kim" and "Knight Rider." The two shows were "fair tries" but aren't holding up in the ratings, she said. She called them "indicative of shows that may or may not be coming back."

Bromstad, who was named to her position in December, also oversees production at NBC and Universal Media Studios.

The network finished last season in fourth place and continues to struggle with its scripted programs. None of NBC's four new fall series clicked with viewers, including the already canceled drama "My Own Worst Enemy."

Citibank wins judgment against Ed McMahon

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Citibank has won an $180,000 judgment against Ed McMahon.

A judge in Santa Monica ruled Thursday that McMahon owes the bank for debt incurred over four years.

Citibank sued the former "Tonight Show" sidekick in June. McMahon never responded, and Judge John H. Reid finally ended the case.

McMahon has faced money woes for the past year, when foreclosure proceedings began on his hilltop mansion. A group of investors recently bought the loan and say they will allow McMahon to live there and make payments.

McMahon has said he was unable to work after breaking his neck in a fall in March 2007. A lawsuit he filed claiming a Los Angeles hospital failed to diagnose and fix his neck is working its way through the court system.

AP

In this Sept. 21, 2008 file photo, Ed McMahon and his wife, Pam Hurn arrive for the 60th Primetime Emmy Awards in Los Angeles.

Family's first grandchild is buried by avalanche of gifts

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

DearAbby

DEAR ABBY: Ever since our baby girl arrived eight months ago, my husband and I have been inundated with baby gifts. Our daughter is the only grandchild on both sides of the family. My husband's parents and mine are divorced and remarried, so there are eight grandparents doting on our daughter. Consequently, we have received multiples of every baby item you can imagine.

Because we live in a small apartment with few closets, there is nowhere to put all these things. We have donated several boxes of clothes and toys to the local shelter. My parents become upset if they visit and we can't produce every single item they sent us. They want us to get rid of other people's gifts and keep only theirs. I don't like the tension this is causing.

Are we obligated to keep these gifts, Abby? Isn't there a way to encourage people to be more restrained in their giving?

TIRED MOM IN THE CITY

DEAR MOM: There is, but it will require you and your husband to become proactive. Tell your parents that you do not have enough room to accommodate their generosity and request that they limit themselves to one gift per couple. To avoid duplication, ask them to coordinate with each other when buying gifts for their grandchild.

As to your parents, explain that you love them, but once a gift is given it is the recipient's to do with as she wishes (right now, that's you). And explain that if you give everyone else's gifts away and not some of theirs, the others will be offended -- so it's not gonna happen. Period.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: My 15-year-old daughter, "Miranda," and I have always been close. We have talked about sex and about how it's always better to tell the truth. We have been open about things since Miranda was old enough to understand -- until now.

Miranda has been going with "Josh" for about a year. His mother found some very graphic sexual messages on his cell phone. When we confronted them, they swore they would not do anything and would wait until they're married. I even discussed birth control with Miranda and planned on getting her an appointment.

Well, I may have been too late. I found a letter to her from Josh. Some of the things he wrote were pornographic -- and they were things he said he wanted to do again! They are playing some of these games at school during breaks and in classrooms where they sit at tables.

I am not sure how to handle this. My husband would never understand. I'm torn about confronting her and the school for not properly supervising these kids. Please help me make the right choice.

TORN UP IN MISSISSIPPI

DEAR TORN UP: Gladly. You are not giving your husband enough credit. He should be told immediately. He will understand only too well that your daughter and her boyfriend have been playing you like a fiddle.

The problem isn't lack of supervision at school. It is that Miranda has been lying to you and spends too much time with her boyfriend.

Your daughter should have far less free time on her hands and also have access to birth control and the knowledge of how to use it. Insist that she become involved in organized activities outside of school, including volunteer work. Right now, your daughter needs guidance and supervision, so please don't let her down.

■■■

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

■■■

For an excellent guide to becoming a better conversationalist and a more attractive person, order "How to Be Popular." Send a business-size, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $6 (U.S. funds only) to: Dear Abby Popularity Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

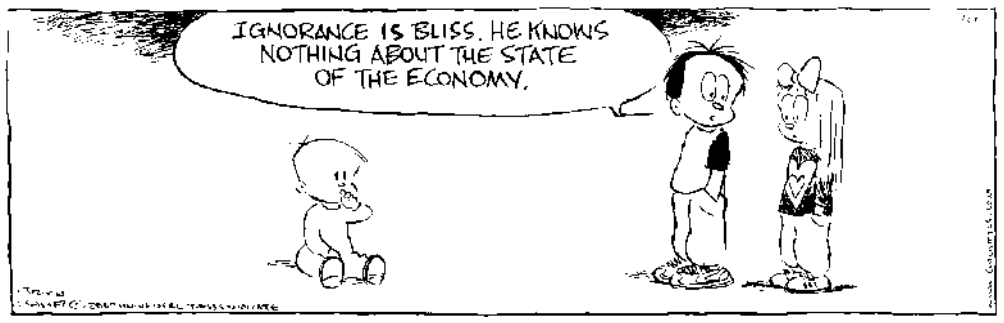
LOOK, I PUT A SNOWBALL ON TOP OF THIS SNOWMAN'S HEAD.
NOW I'LL BE THE NEXT WILLIAM TELL, AND I'LL HIT THE SNOWBALL CLEAN OFF!
OUCH.
AHHH! HE FLINCHED!

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

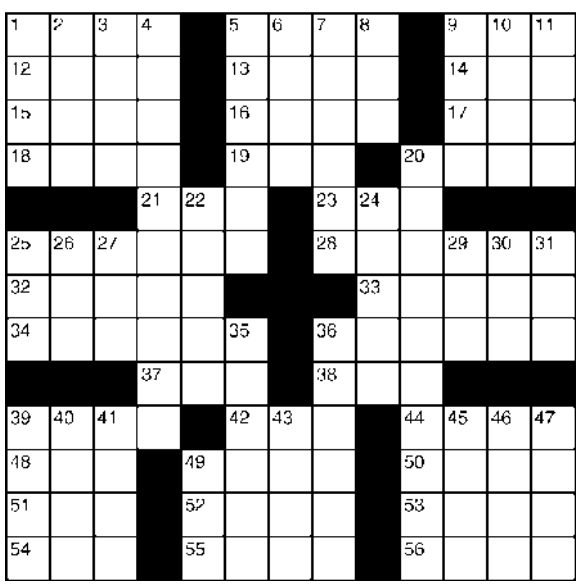
ACROSS
1 Holyfield venue
5 Hourglass fill
9 Mother among mammals
12 Blood-hound's clue
13 Singer Aiken
14 Call — day
15 Venetian magis-trate
16 Carry on
17 One bk. in a set
18 Black-thorn
19 — fix
20 Starc
21 Artesian appella-tion
23 Cookie holder
25 Grab
28 Covert Garden offerings
32 Black or Carpenter
33 Super-man portrayer
34 Collision
36 Loose-leaf cover
37 Biz boss
38 The whole shooting match
39 Jazz style
42 Super-skilled one
44 Capri, e.g.
48 Commo-tion
49 Karenina or Kourni-kova
50 Pleased
51 N.J. neighbor
52 Elite alterna-tive
53 Suspend
54 Corrode
55 Wardrobe malfunc-tion
56 Youngster

DOWN
1 Scepters
2 "American —"
3 "Forget it"
4 Eco friendly organiza-tion
5 Pinch pennies
6 Dersho-witz or Green-span
7 New Mexico native tribe
8 Decorate Easter eggs
9 Prima donna
10 The gamut
11 Guy
20 Give the go-ahead
22 Pound part
24 30-day period
25 Tackle moguls
26 "Platoon" setting
27 Dadaist painter
29 Roulette bet
30 Rd.
31 Sun. talk
35 Perma-nent res dent, maybe
36 Fair
39 Nephrite
40 Concept
41 A bit of a shock?
43 Erstwhile Peruvian
45 Dispatch
46 Slender
47 Advan-tage
49 Quick on the uptake

Solution time: 27 mins.

L	A	B		G	O	L	D		T	A	R	P
O	W	E		E	W	E	R		B	O	I	L
B	E	H	K	E	L	E	Y		J	N	I	O
		M	I	S	S			P	I	F	T	Y
C	H	U	I	E		H	U	E	S			
H		D	E		R	E	S	E	M	B	L	E
A	R	A		B	O	X	E	R		E	E	L
D	E	S	P	I	S	E	D		C	R	A	B
			S	L	E	D		P	O	L	K	A
P	A	Y	E	E			D	E	L	I		
E	S	A	J		D	E	R	N	A	N	K	E
R		N	D		A	R	F	A		F	O	N
M	A	K	O		Y	A	W	L		R	I	D

Yesterday's answer 1-17



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Yvonne Zima, 20; Kid Rock, 38; Jim Carrey, 47; Susanna Hoffs, 50

Happy Birthday: A change will be inevitable this year but don't let it hold you back. Chances are good you needed to get rid of some things in your life in order to move into a new phase. Look beyond your normal sphere of people, places and possibilities and you will find what you are looking for. Your numbers are 4, 9, 16, 20, 23, 35, 47

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): An unusual and inspirational partnership can be developed with someone who gets what you are trying to accomplish. Put together a plan, contract and schedule you both can live with. Your enthusiasm will motivate everyone to help. ✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Focus on the here-and-now and your personal endeavors. Your love life will pick up, taking a positive twist that should leave you sitting in an ideal situation. This is a great day to show how much you care. ✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Don't leave anything to chance. You have the wherewithal and the knowledge to take control and get what you want. A short trip down memory lane will remind you of a past experience that will help you make the right decision now. Open up regarding your plans. ✪✪✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): You have to look at things as they are and proceed without letting your emotions take over, causing you to make a mistake. A change in status will occur if you are open about your feelings and fair in your assessment. ✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): You have creative ideas that will help you initiate a new project and, as long as you stick to a budget, you can drum up interest and some extra cash. A trip or conversation with someone from a different background will help you excel. ✪✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Don't be reluctant to put in extra hours if it will ensure being in the loop for business endeavors that can influence your future. Getting things finished on time will make the sort of impression that is needed. ✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Put time and effort into fixing up your place or invite friends over to cheer you up. Keep busy and don't let someone who's grouchy spoil your day. A creative idea you have can turn into a workable income if you follow through. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Ignore someone who is on a rampage or upset with his or her life and is taking it out on you. A change of plans shouldn't bother you, especially if it brings you closer to someone who motivates and inspires you. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): You may have to make some adjustments to your current plans in order to proceed. Someone is likely to pull out of an agreement. Don't get upset—go it alone. There is money to be made. ✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Emotional matters will cloud your day if you let someone you feel responsible for dictate what you can and cannot do. Keep your work and your personal life separate. ✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Good things are heading your way, so be ready to accept them. If you take too much time to mull things over, you will miss out. You will receive an offer that will help you out financially and professionally. ✪✪✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): A silent partner will help you discover your niche and encourage you to develop your talent. Uncertainty regarding your personal life may get in the way of a good decision. Step back and you will realize who is good for you and who isn't. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You set high standards yourself. You are inventive, imaginative and a problem solver. You are a gifted and popular commentator.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun,* ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

1				7				5
		4				9		
	6		5		9		8	
		6				7		
8				2				6
		2				5		
	1		2		3		5	
		5				6		
7				8				4

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 1/17

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

3	5	8	2	6	4	7	1	9
7	1	9	8	5	3	6	2	4
2	4	6	1	9	7	5	8	3
6	8	4	3	7	1	9	5	2
9	7	2	4	8	5	3	6	1
1	3	5	6	2	9	8	4	7
5	2	3	9	1	8	4	7	6
8	9	1	7	4	6	2	3	5
4	6	7	5	3	2	1	9	8

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 1/17

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, over, backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

CHILI RECIPES **Solution: 5 letters**

E	T	B	O	R	G	O	P	X	E	M	X	E	T	Y
E	U	E	N	O	N	C	H	I	L	I	O	C	C	T
S	R	G	I	V	I	I	E	A	N	R	S	I	H	A
E	K	D	O	A	N	X	A	N	I	T	P	R	U	M
E	E	N	N	L	N	E	T	G	N	S	O	S	N	A
H	Y	E	S	F	A	M	I	A	O	P	P	M	K	L
C	S	L	A	S	C	N	R	D	R	I	D	O	S	E
I	E	B	X	A	A	U	A	O	C	A	C	O	S	S
T	L	E	E	L	A	N	P	E	E	U	C	R	B	E
N	O	E	T	T	O	O	S	R	M	O	I	H	U	O
E	J	F	S	I	R	E	B	I	E	R	L	S	R	T
H	I	E	C	T	H	C	N	U	L	T	R	U	R	A
T	R	I	I	S	O	U	R	C	R	E	A	M	I	M
U	F	O	N	E	P	A	L	A	J	P	G	W	I	O
A	N	C	H	O	S	S	A	L	L	I	T	R	O	T

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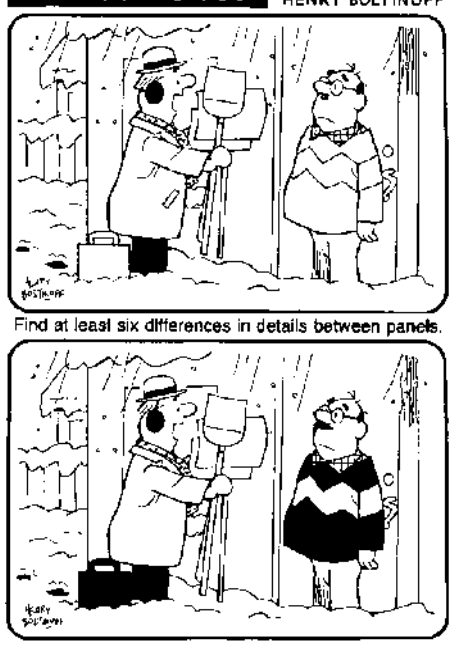
Aficionados, Analogue, Anchos, Authentic, Beef, Blend, Bread, Burrito, Canning, Cheese, Chi, Chunks, Cumin, Flavor, Frijoles, Garlic, Heat, Jalapeno, Lunch, Mexico, Mushrooms, Onions, Original, Petro, Pinto, Proportion, Restaurants, Rice, Salt, Sauce, Sour cream, Spices, Spicy, Tamales, Texas, Tex-Mex, Tomatoes, Tortillas, Turkey, Water

Yesterday's Answer: Chanel

HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.

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Differences: 1. Man's sweater's black. 2. Mustache is taller. 3. Earmuffs are different. 4. Briefcase is black. 5. Shovel handles are longer. 6. Coat pocket is missing

Wishing Well®

2	4	5	4	3	5	7	3	6	2	4	7	2
B	W	M	R	N	O	L	E	V	E	A	O	O
6	8	4	8	2	4	6	4	6	2	8	6	5
A	C	P	H	B	U	L	P	U	J	A	E	D
6	8	4	8	7	8	6	7	6	2	4	2	6
F	R	L	M	V	I	R	E	I	E	O	C	E
5	4	8	6	8	4	3	5	3	8	6	3	8
E	O	N	N	G	S	W	R	T	N	D	H	E
7	4	2	3	4	6	8	4	5	8	4	5	3
O	E	T	O	E	S	W	N	A	F	D	T	U
4	3	8	7	2	5	7	2	5	3	5	2	8
S	G	R	F	I	F	H	V	D	H	F	F	I
5	7	8	3	7	5	8	7	3	5	8	5	5
S	O	E	T	M	I	N	E	S	R	D	E	S

HERE IS A PLEASANT LITTLE GAME that will give you a message every day. It's a numerical puzzle designed to spell out your fortune. Count the letters in your first name. If the number of letters is 6 or more, subtract 4. If the number is less than 6, add 3. The result is your key number. Start at the upper left-hand corner and check one of your key numbers, left to right. Then read the message the letters under the checked figures give you.

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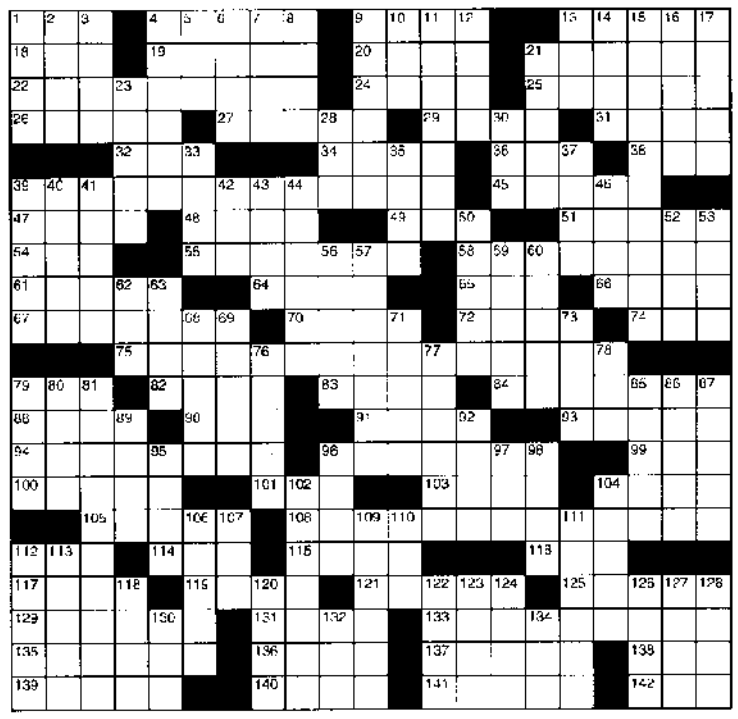
Super Crossword

SWEET GNAW-THINGS

ACROSS
1 Pugilistic poke
4 Silenced a squeak
9 Fuel source
13 "Turandot" tenor
18 Heady quaff
19 Savanna sight
20 Lhasa —
21 Arbus apparatus
22 Rodent's favorite Monkees tune?
24 Lost in thought
25 Nuclear
26 Brimming
27 Join up
29 Take into account
31 Hook's mate
32 — reaction
34 Diva Ponselle
36 Moon crawler
38 Relative of -ator
39 Rodent cheese-cake?
45 Laundry problem
47 Frigga's fellow
48 Young boxers
49 Relished a roast
51 "Taras Bulba" author
54 Emulate Pinocchio
55 Brandy cocktail
58 Protect with plastic
61 Resident
64 "Yours, Mine and —" (`68 film)
65 Keatsian creation
66 Redact
67 "The Bartered Bride" composer
70 Serenade accompaniment
72 TV's "South —"
74 Road curve
75 Rodent's educational level?
79 Dit's cousin
82 Read quickly
83 Actress Vinna
84 Peeper protectors
88 Oomph
90 Tokyo, once
91 Like some cellars
93 — may suit you
94 Closet freshener
96 Calculator features
99 Winter hazard
100 Trattoria treat
101 TV chef Martin
103 "— Shuffle" ('27 song)
104 Seaweed product
105 Bobby's flashlight
108 Rodent's Olympic motto?
112 Broad st
114 "Gotcha!"
115 Article
116 "— Night" (`56 hit)
117 Apt rhyme for squirm
119 "L'— c'est moi"
121 Matches
125 Inception
128 Cartoonist Charles
131 Writer Charles
133 Fictional rodent?
135 Rink rental
136 List ender
137 "Peer Gynt" composer
138 Psychic Geller
139 Veronica of "Hill Street Blues"
140 Surrender
141 Big revolver?
142 Sticky stuff

DOWN
1 Secure spot
2 — mater
3 Rosary part
4 Speak freely
5 Roth —
6 Exist
7 Temptation location
8 Earl — Biggers
9 Living room
10 Anti-pollution grp.
11 "The — Jungle" ('50 film)
12 Carry
13 Purrfect pet?
14 Grandpa McCoy
15 Recent refreshment?
16 Pisces follower
17 Sapphire side
21 Future officer
23 "We've Only Just —" ('70 hit)
28 Hockey legend
30 Urban transport
33 Sugar amts.
35 Barbecue
37 Christmas visitors
39 Voting venue
40 Turn of phrase
41 Sib's kid
42 On the — wire (alert)
43 Summer golf
44 Tristan's tootsie
46 Actress Skye
50 Take the honey and run
52 Mayberry town drunk
53 "Why don't we?"
56 Sadistic
57 In the saddle
59 Saying
60 Cheerful
62 Bk. conveniences
63 Neighbor of Thailand
68 Used the microwave
69 Digress on
71 Prose piece
73 Boat bottom
76 Atlanta campus
77 Indentation
78 Mintz or Whitney
79 Johnny of "Chocolat"
80 Soap additive
81 City of rodents?
85 Architect Jones
86 Window dressing?
87 McCarthy's trunkmate
89 West, alliance
92 Brace
95 Asta's mistress
96 Snarl
97 Banned pesticide
98 London district
102 Shakin up
104 Actor's actor?
106 Spassky's game
107 Pillbox, e.g.
109 Bit of a beach
110 Medical grp.
111 "V's "Eight Is —"
112 About to sink
113 Screwdriver ingredient
118 Spouse
120 Composer Wilder
122 Prod
123 Binchy's "— Road"
124 Tend the sauce
126 Wallop
127 Architect Saarinen
128 Small combo
130 Gibson or Tillis
132 Unbalanced
134 Wager



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Trivia test

by Bill Rodriguez

1. MYTHOLOGY: A satyr is a mythical creature that is half man and half what?
2. MILITARY: What is a dreadnought?
3. FAMOUS QUOTATIONS: Who said, "That government is best which governs the least, because its people discipline themselves."
4. PSYCHOLOGY: What fear is represented by the condition called gamophobia?
5. LANGUAGE: What does the Greek prefix "intro" mean?
6. GEOGRAPHY: Where is the Denali National Park and Preserve?
7. MOVIES: What is the name of Sigourney Weaver's cat in the "Alien" movie series?
8. ENTERTAINERS: What was the name of ventriloquist Edgar Bergen's most famous puppet?
9. HISTORY: What land did Alexander the Great rule as king?
10. MUSIC: Which rock group recorded the hit "Walk This Way"?

Answers

1. Goat or horse
2. A heavily armored battleship
3. Thomas Jefferson
4. Fear of marriage
5. Within
6. Alaska
7. Jones or Jonesy
8. Charlie McCarthy
9. Macedon, or Macedonia
10. Aerosmith

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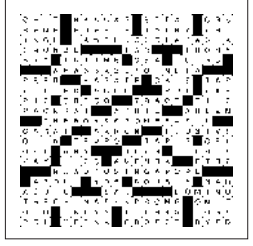
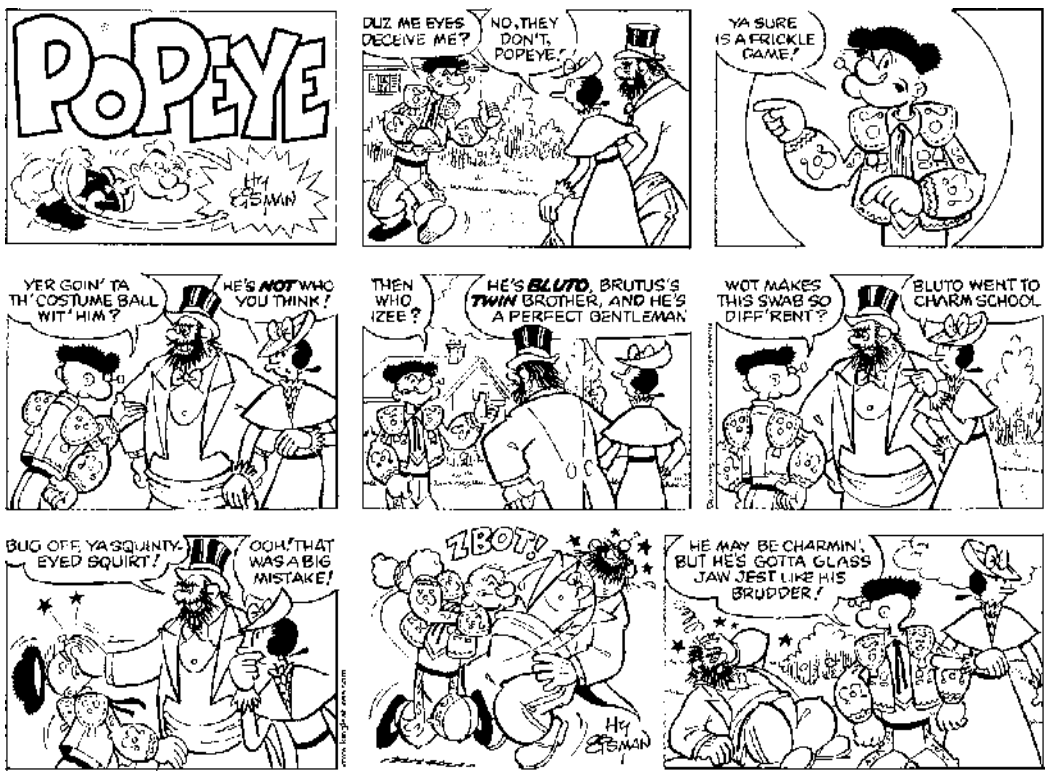
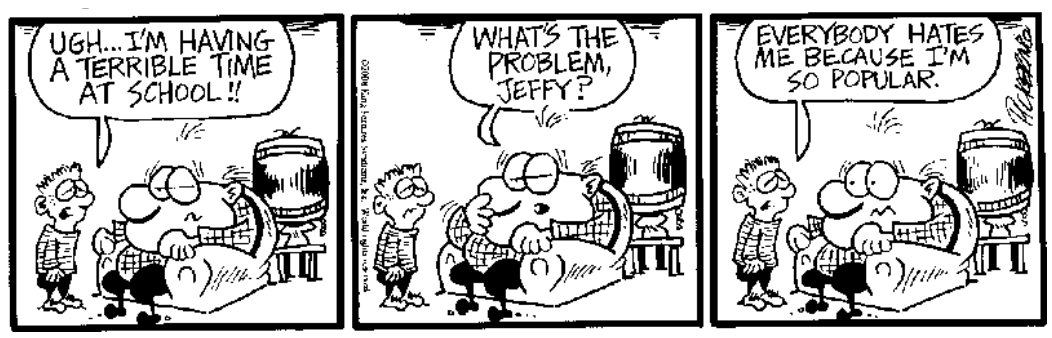
Saturday's Answers



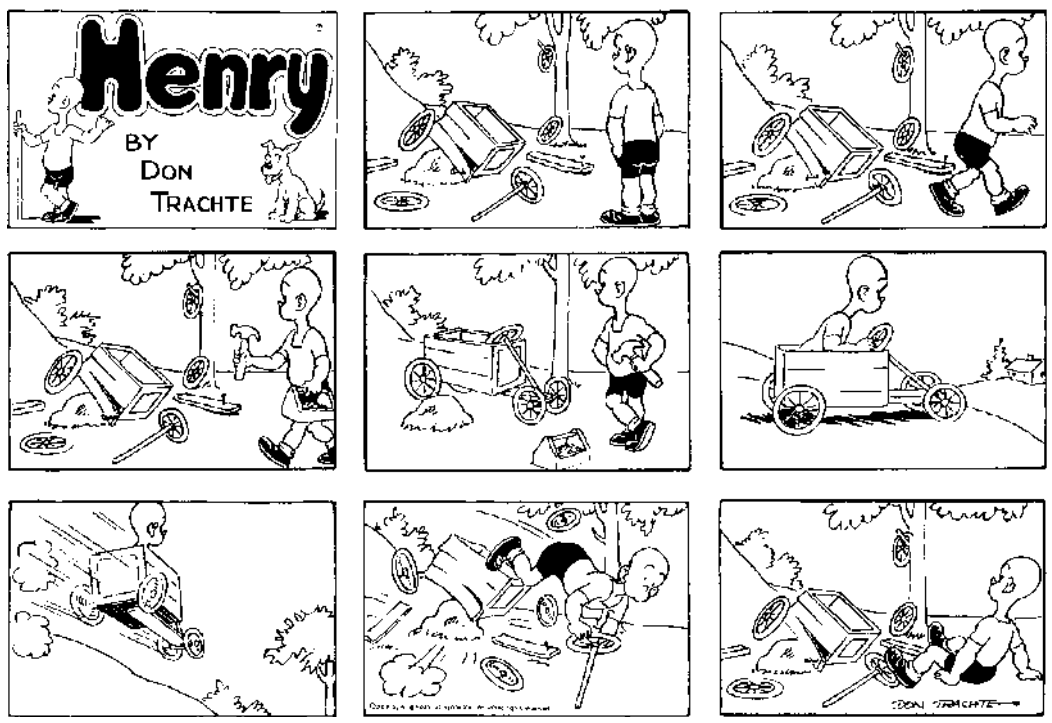

POPEYE
HEY EUGENE
DUZ ME EYES DECEIVE ME?
NO, THEY DON'T, POPEYE!
YA SURE IS A FRICKLE GAME!
YER GOIN' TA TH' COSTUME BALL WIT' HIM?
HE'S NOT WHO YOU THINK!
THEN WHO IZEE?
HE'S BLUTO, BRUTUS'S TWIN BROTHER, AND HE'S A PERFECT GENTLEMAN
WOT MAKES THIS SWAB SO DIFF'RENT?
BLUTO WENT TO CHARM SCHOOL
BUG OFF, YA SQUINTY-EYED SQUIRT!
OOH! THAT WAS A BIG MISTAKE!
ZBOT!
HE MAY BE CHARMIN', BUT HE'S GOTTA GLASS JAW JEST LIKE HIS BRUDDER!

Amber Waves by Dave T. Phipps

The Spats by Jeff Pickering



MARK TRAIL
THE PREDATOR-PREY RELATIONSHIP IN THE WILD ENSURES THAT ONLY THE FITTEST SURVIVE
WHEN MAN INTERFERES, THIS NATURAL BALANCE IS UPSET
IF ALL THE MILLIONS OF RODENTS AND INSECT PESTS PRODUCED EACH YEAR WERE TO REACH MATURITY...
THEY WOULD QUICKLY CONSUME ALL AVAILABLE FOOD AND DIE OF STARVATION
DISEASE, FOOD SHORTAGES, AND PREDATORS ALL SERVE TO PREVENT THIS SITUATION
PREDATORS, ESPECIALLY, KEEP THESE CREATURES UNDER CONTROL, BUT NEVER TO THE POINT OF EXTERMINATION...
FOR WHEN INSECTS AND RODENTS BECOME SCARCE, FEWER PREDATORS SURVIVE... AND THUS A NATURAL BALANCE IS MAINTAINED BETWEEN HUNTER AND HUNTED
Jack Elson



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	COMBO (PRINT AND ONLINE)
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• 5-Liner	**$35**
• 3-Liner with picture	**$45**
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Classified Ads

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

Saturday Issue:
- *Saipan Tribune:* All ads placed Friday before 12 noon will come out Saturday issue and anything placed thereafter will be published on Monday issue.

CANCELLATION

Classified Ads

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

REFUNDS

Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

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Saipan Tribune will not be responsible for errors after the first day of publication. Errors should be called in before noon of the issue date. *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

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All advertising in the *Saipan Tribune* are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

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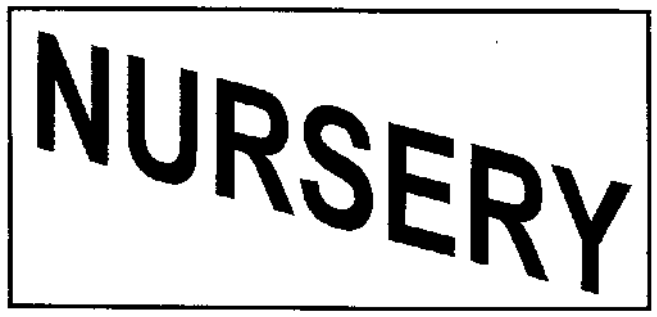
Find the familiar phrase, saying or name in this arrangement of letters.



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WHATZIT Solution:
Nursery slopes

Deng, Rose lead Bulls over Cavs in OT

CHICAGO (AP)—Derrick Rose was having so much fun late in the game, he couldn't help but let out a primal scream. Then, after a dramatic finish, he let out a big sigh of relief.

Rose scored 16 points after a slow start and Luol Deng added 22 to lead the Chicago Bulls to a surprising 102-93 overtime victory over the Cleveland Cavaliers on Thursday night after LeBron James missed a jumper at the end of regulation.

Tied at 87 through regulation after James' 21-footer banged off the rim, the Bulls scored 12 of the first 13 points in OT to avoid a four-game sweep by the Cavaliers.

"Real fun, especially playing a team like that," Rose said. "They're a good team. We played well together, passed the ball good."

Rose let out a loud roar while converting a three-point play that gave the Bulls an 83-81 lead with 4:50 left in regulation. It wasn't his biggest moment, though.

He converted another 3-point play 52 seconds into the extra period that broke the 87-87 tie and Kirk Hinrich's 3-pointer with 3:36 left made it 93-87.

James (28 points) then hit 1 of 2 free throws, but Deng put the Cavaliers away with back-to-back 3-pointers from the left corner—the second bouncing straight up off the rim before dropping through the net to make it 99-88.

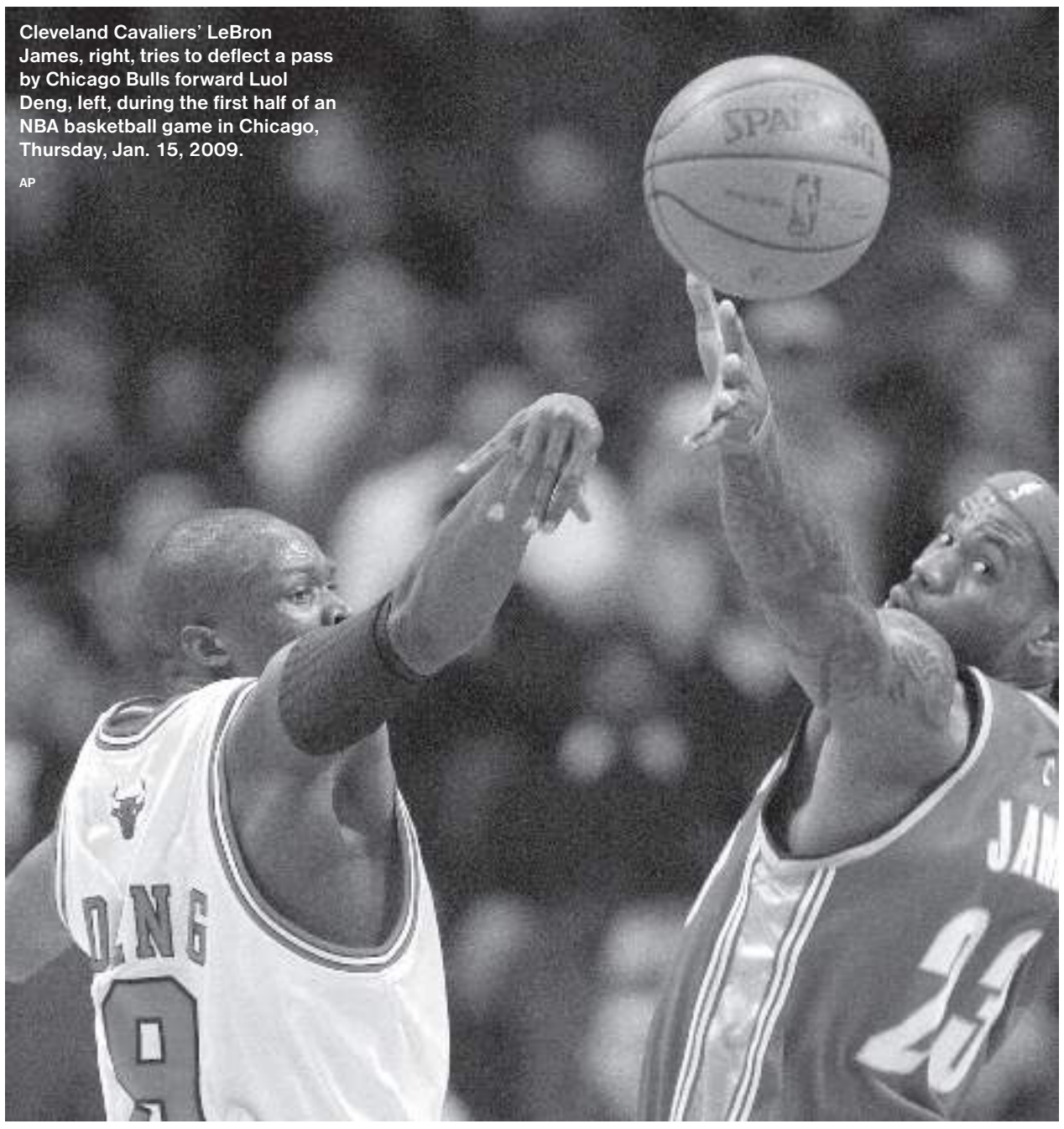
"You saying it was luck?" Deng asked.

Mo Williams scored 26 points for the Cavaliers, hitting 5 of 10 3-pointers. But it was a rough night for James, who shot 8-for-28 and hit 1 of 6 3-pointers. He also committed a season-high eight turnovers in what he said was "probably my worst game of the season."

"I absolutely had no lift tonight," said James, who was playing with a cold. "Every time that happens, when I get sick, I miss layups—layup after layup, things I usually make."

Besides losing the game, the Cavaliers suffered a big loss in the process.

Guard Delonte West could be out for a while after he broke his right wrist in a nasty collision with Rose late in the first quarter. That happened when West—off to a strong start with 11 points—tried to block Rose's layup from behind with 1:36 left.



Cleveland Cavaliers' LeBron James, right, tries to deflect a pass by Chicago Bulls forward Luol Deng, left, during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Chicago, Thursday, Jan. 15, 2009.

AP

Both players crashed to the court, but while Rose quickly popped up, West stayed down clutching his wrist with a non-displaced fracture. He also had a cut above his left eye that required two stitches.

"They told me I'm going to be out a few weeks with this fracture of my wrist," said West, who is left-handed. "I really don't use my right hand, anyway."

Even so, he's scheduled for an MRI on Friday morning.

The Cavaliers, who began the night with the league's best record, were already missing forward Ben Wallace (intestinal flu) and center Zydrunas Ilgauskas. Now, they'll probably have to make due without another starter in West, who was fourth on the team at 12.3 points per game, for a while.

At least James got through this one unscathed. He just wasn't quite up to his usual dominant standards and he vented several times at the referees.

It was a far cry from his performances early in the season against the Bulls, when he scored 41 twice in a four-day span in November, but the Cavaliers still were in position to win.

Trailing 83-81 after Rose's three-point play with 4:50 left in regulation, Williams and James hit two free throws apiece and Anderson Varejao dunked to give the Cavaliers an 87-83 lead with 2:10 left.

But they couldn't put the Bulls away.

Rose, who had six points through three quarters, converted on a drive and then had a chance to tie it at 87 with 1:32 left. Instead, he missed two free throws, but the Bulls hung in.

James got bottled up driving along the left side, resulting in a jump ball, and Deng poked the ball away from Williams, leading to two free throws by Rose that tied it at 87 with 17 seconds left.

The Cavaliers then got the ball to James, but he couldn't deliver.

"LeBron had a great look at the end of (regulation)," Williams said. "We'll take that any day."

Nuggets 119, Suns 113, OT

At Denver, Chauncey Billups scored five of his game-high 26 points in overtime and Denver beat Phoenix.

Nene had 17 points and 14 rebounds and Kenyon Martin had 24 points, including a clinching 3-pointer with 29.6 seconds left in overtime. Martin also had eight rebounds and a career-high seven steals for Denver, which has won seven of eight.

Grant Hill scored a season-high 25 points and Steve Nash had 20 points and 14 assists for the Suns, who played without center Shaquille O'Neal, who was inactive for the game. Phoenix coach Terry Porter said it was a "routine" night off for O'Neal.

Trail Blazers 105, Nets 99

At East Rutherford, N.J., Brandon Roy scored 29 points and rookie Jerryd Bayless added a career-high 23 to lead Portland over New Jersey, snapping the Nets' season-high four-game home winning streak.

LaMarcus Aldridge added 20 points and Travis Outlaw scored all 13 of his points in the second half when the Trail Blazers rallied from an 11-point deficit.

Devin Harris had 23 points and eight assists to lead New Jersey. Rookie Brook Lopez added 17 points, Bobby Simmons 14 and Vince Carter 13 while playing with a slightly sprained ankle.

Titans coordinator Schwartz to coach 0-16 Lions

DETROIT (AP)—Jim Schwartz insisted he loves challenges. Well, he's got one. The Detroit Lions, the NFL's first 0-16 team, agreed Thursday on a four-year deal with Schwartz to make him their next coach. The former Tennessee Titans defensive coordinator will be introduced at a Friday news conference at Ford Field, where Detroit lost its home games last year by an average of 21.4 points to break another dubious league record.

The 42-year-old Schwartz just finished his eighth season as the Titans' defensive coordinator and his 10th on their staff. He interviewed for a second time with the Lions on Monday.

"After an extensive search that included several highly qualified coaches, we are thrilled that Jim Schwartz will become our team's head coach," team president Tom Lewand said in a statement. "(General manager) Martin (Mayhew) and I believe that Jim's qualifications and vision will lead this organization on the field toward our goal of becoming a championship football team."

The chance to lead an infamous team only seemed to motivate Schwartz to get the job.

"I don't shy away from a challenge," he said during a news conference earlier this week.

Detroit interviewed Schwartz after the regular season and had to wait for Tennessee to be eliminated from the playoffs to speak with him again. The Titans lost to Baltimore on Saturday.

Tennessee coach Jeff Fisher congratulated the Lions for hiring the "right guy" and said in a statement that Schwartz will be missed in Tennessee.

"In his eight years as our defensive coordinator, Jim has clearly put his stamp on that side of the ball," Fisher said. "He is competitive, a tremendous communicator and motivator, and in our opinion, he has been ready for this next step for several years."

The Lions also showed some interest in Giants defensive coordinator Steve Spagnuolo, Vikings defensive coordinator Leslie Frazier and Chargers defensive coordinator Ron Rivera.

Before being hired by Tennessee, Schwartz spent three years on the Baltimore Ravens' staff. He also was a college and pro scout for the Cleveland Browns and that experience might be valuable in Detroit.

The Lions have the No. 1 pick in April, along with first- and third-round picks from the Dallas Cowboys, and need to find players to spark a turnaround.

Schwartz had an idea of what to do with the first pick.

"It's probably time to find a replacement for Bobby Layne," Schwartz said Monday, showing he knows at least a little about the history of perhaps the NFL's worst franchise.

Lewand doubled over, then composed himself enough to avoid bursting out with laughter.

What isn't a joke, though, is how bad Detroit has been and how often it has failed to draft or acquire a viable, long-term option at quarterback.

The Lions last won a title in 1957 with Layne as starting quarterback. A broken leg kept Layne out of the NFL championship game, but backup Tobin Rote led Detroit to a 59-14 win over the Cleveland Browns.

Since then, the Lions have the same number of playoff victories as Pro Bowl QBs: one.

Detroit will count on Schwartz to use his background to come up with ways to improve a defense that ranked last in the league and gave up 517 points - threatening the NFL record for points allowed (533) in a season set by the 1981 Baltimore Colts.

"There's no better feeling than turning a situation around," he has said.

Schwartz played linebacker at Georgetown, where he earned a degree in economics. He started his coaching career as a graduate assistant at Maryland in 1989, later had the same position at Minnesota and went on to become a secondary coach for North Carolina Central and linebackers coach at Colgate.

The Baltimore native became a candidate to be a head coach because of what he's done in Tennessee. His resume and style led to interviews in previous years with Miami, Atlanta, Washington and San Francisco.

The Titans ranked in the top seven in yards allowed each of the past two seasons and finished second in points allowed per game at 14.6 in 2008. His 2003 defense ranked first in the NFL in rushing defense and led the league in third down defense at 27.7—the lowest since the 1998 Oakland Raiders.

The avid chess player analyzes football-related statistics, looking for tendencies, then has the ability to relay what he has learned to players.

Southern California QB Sanchez to enter NFL draft

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Mark Sanchez made his own call.

Coming off a record-setting Rose Bowl, the Southern California quarterback will skip his senior season to enter the NFL draft—going against the advice of coach Pete Carroll.

Sanchez, a fourth-year junior, announced his plans at a campus news conference Thursday, the deadline for underclassmen to declare for the draft.

The past three stars who played quarterback at USC under Carroll stayed for their senior seasons, and the former NFL coach thought Sanchez should do the same.

Carroll tried to convince Sanchez that another year of college experience would help him in the pro game, but Sanchez said he had carefully weighed all the considerations before deciding to leave.

"It has been my dream since I was just a little kid to play in the NFL and thanks to this great academic institution and football program, I have the opportunity to realize that dream," said Sanchez, dapperly dressed in a business suit.

"It was with a heavy heart that I say goodbye to this university. But I can't tell you how excited I am for this dream to come true."

Heisman Trophy winners Carson Palmer and Matt Leinart, along with John David Booty, all returned for their final year of eligibility with the Trojans. Palmer was the first overall pick in the 2002 NFL draft and Leinart was selected 10th in 2005.

Carroll, who said he considers Sanchez as talented as any of those three, discussed the pros and cons with him.

"We've talked at great depth and great length. We've covered this from A to Z ... going until late last night," Carroll said. "We don't see this decision the same. (But) I'm thrilled for Mark. For any of our kids to live the dream and do what they want to do with their football career, this is a great place to do this."

AP

Southern California quarterback Mark Sanchez announces that he is making himself available for the NFL draft during a news conference at the USC campus in Los Angeles on Thursday, Jan. 15, 2009.

Because 2008 Heisman winner Sam Bradford of Oklahoma, 2007 Heisman winner Tim Tebow of Florida and Texas star Colt McCoy all plan to return to school next season, Sanchez and Georgia's Matthew Stafford—another junior coming out early—likely will be the top quarterback prospects in the draft.

Mitch Mustain, who transferred from Arkansas after going 8-0 in games he started as a Razorbacks freshman in 2006, is expected to compete with Aaron Corp, Garrett Green and incoming freshman Matt Barkley for the Trojans' starting job.

Carroll, a former head coach with the New York Jets and New England Patriots, thinks another year of college experience would have greatly benefited Sanchez, who started at USC for only one full season.

"Mark is going against the grain on this decision and he knows that. He knows that coming out early is a tremendous challenge for a quarterback and the statistics don't back up that it's easy to be successful in the way that he's going about it," Carroll said.

"We've seen successes and we've seen guys come up short on this deal. We hope this works out beautifully for Mark and his family."

Carroll isn't selling Sanchez short.

"He's a competitive guy, a guy that's willing to take on this challenge in a way that he's going to make it happen," the coach said. "Mark clearly has the potential to be as good as any of those guys we've had. We saw it early on.

"All it is is an experience issue."

Sanchez ended his college career with his finest game. The 6-foot-3, 225-pounder went 28-for-35 against Penn State, setting a Rose Bowl record by completing 80 percent of his passes. He threw for 413 yards and four touchdowns, and also ran for a score in the Trojans' 38-24 victory.

Sanchez led the Trojans to a 12-1 record and No. 3 national ranking last season after going 2-1 the previous year while Booty was hurt.

A high school star in nearby Mission Viejo who redshirted at USC in 2005, Sanchez finished last season with 3,207 yards passing, 34 touchdowns and 10 interceptions. He threw for 695 yards and seven touchdowns with five interceptions in 2007.

Sanchez said he came to USC to get an education, to compete at the highest college level and earn a chance to play in the NFL.

"I'm proud to say that this spring, I'll have the opportunity to do both," said Sanchez, on track to receive his degree in communications.

His father, Nick, said he had mixed emotions about his son's decision to enter the draft.

"As a parent, I'd like for him to stay in school for another 10 years," he said. "But it's great to see a young man trying to live his dream."

Harvin jumps to NFL, *Spikes returns to Florida*

GAINESVILLE, Fla. (AP)—Florida star Percy Harvin is taking his speed, elusiveness and durability concerns to the NFL.

The junior playmaker said Thursday he is leaving school early to turn pro, but Gators linebacker Brandon Spikes will return for his senior season.

Both players announced their intentions hours before the deadline for underclassmen to declare for the NFL draft.

Even without Harvin, the Gators likely will be the preseason favorite to win a third national championship in four years. But there's little doubt Florida will miss its do-it-all receiver.

A 5-foot-11, 195-pound dynamo from Virginia Beach, Va., Harvin led the team in receiving and was second in rushing. He caught 40 passes for 644 yards and seven touchdowns, and ran for 660 yards and 10 scores.

He missed five games in three years because of injury and was limited in several more, an issue that could keep him from being a top 10 pick in April.

When healthy, though, Harvin looked like the fastest—maybe even the most talented—player on the field. He scored at least once in 15 consecutive games, the longest streak in the nation, and burned defenses while lining up at receiver, running back and even quarterback.

"Percy is the most dynamic player I've ever coached and can change the game on any given play," Gators coach Urban Meyer said. "He has the best first step I've ever seen and his ability to plant his foot and go is unmatched. Percy is a relentless competitor who wants to win. We wish him the best of luck and we look forward to having him around our program."

Harvin finished his career with 133 receptions for 1,929 yards and 13 touchdowns, and 194 carries for 1,852 yards and 19 scores. He averaged 9.5 yards per carry and 11.6 yards every time he touched the ball.

Maruyama takes the lead at the Sony Open

HONOLULU (AP)—Shigeki Maruyama took a step back from obscurity on the PGA Tour with a 5-under 65 in the wind and occasional rain Thursday afternoon for a one-shot lead in the Sony Open.

Maruyama, who failed to keep his tour card last year for the first time this decade, showed signs of improving in Japan late last year and kept it up on a challenging afternoon at Waialae.

He dropped only one shot, and took the outright lead with a 5-foot birdie on the par-3 17th.

That knocked Geoff Ogilvy off the top of the leaderboard for the first time this year. The Sony Open is only the second tournament, but Ogilvy is coming off a wire-to-wire victory in the Mercedes-Benz Championship last week, and opened with a 66.

Boo Weekley, Brian Gay and PGA Tour rookie Webb Simpson also were at 66.

The first full-field event of the 2009 season was filled with all kinds of weather - hot blasts of sunshine would be interrupted by pounding rain that would last 10 minutes, and then the skies would clear.

But the wind never left, blowing 20 mph at sunrise and still causing the palm trees to sway late in the afternoon. Tour officials moved up several tees by at least 30 yards, and Waialae played 166 yards shorter than the scorecard.

The forecast Friday was for gusts up to 50 mph, and the Honolulu public schools already have been closed.

"I knew the weather report was for a lot of wind today, so I was mentally prepared when I got to the golf course," Maruyama said. "Then I snap-hooked one on the first hole, but all I was trying to do really all day was just keep my rhythm, keep my tempo."

Ogilvy was simply trying to keep going, and he did that well.

One week after his six-shot victory at Kapalua, the 31-year-old Australian kept the ball in the tiny fairways of Waialae and made six birdies to take the lead among the morning starters.

"I just think everyone who played last week is at an advantage coming here, because they have all got a week of tournament golf under their belt, a week in the wind under their belt, same sort of grass," Ogilvy said.

That would explain Weekley and Gay, who also played last week in the winners-only Mercedes-Benz Championship.

But Simpson?

The rookie from Wake Forest has not played since earning his card at Q-school last month, and weather at home in North Carolina hasn't been conducive to practice. Waialae proved to be a tough place to start, especially with the wind.

"I was pretty nervous," Simpson said. "I said a quick prayer before I teed off, and I was fine."

The group at 67 included Luke Donald, Charles Howell III and Brendon de Jonge, who won the Nationwide Tour money title last year.

The teenagers held their own.

Tadd Fujikawa, an 18-year-old senior in high school playing the Sony Open for the third straight year, took double bogey on the tough opening hole and settled down the rest of the way for a 71, leaving him a good chance to make his first PGA Tour cut as a pro. He tied for 20th two years ago as an amateur.

Lorens Chan, the 14-year-old who earned the amateur exemption, had two birdies in his round of 72.

Maruyama struggled with shoulder and knee injuries last year, and went home to Japan the final five months of the season to recharge. He had a pair of top threes late in the year, and his confidence is slowly coming around.

"It was a number of things last year—physically, mentally, emotionally," he said. "That's why I went to Japan."

He is playing this week on a sponsor's exemption and would like to play more on the PGA Tour. "It would sure make things easier if I could win," Maruyama said.

Defending champion K.J. Choi bogeyed the par-5 18th for a 68, and he spoke for a majority of the field when he described the difficulties of such a strong wind.

"First time in the Kona wind," he said "Today is more difficult than the last time, especially short putts. The grain is going left-to-right, the wind is blowing left-to-right. Very confusing."

As for the rain?

"Six times with the umbrella," he said.

Only 39 players in the 144-man field managed to break par. That included Jeff Klauk, one of 26 rookies at Waialae, who was tied for the lead at 5 under with his third straight birdie on the 11th hole. He was 4 over the rest of the way.

"It's windy out there, ain't no doubt about that," Weekley said. "I like the conditions that's out here right now. I don't think anybody can run away from you in these conditions."

He played with Ogilvy, who did just that last week at Kapalua when he won by six shots. The wind never blew quite this hard at Kapalua, but it was manageable this week because Waialae is at sea level.

"It was a fair bit easier," Ogilvy said. "There's so much guesswork last week when you're 230 yards away and between an 8-iron and a 9-iron. When it's flat, it's just the wind you have to deal with."

24 to vie for King of the Lanes title

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

The 2008 Budweiser King of the Lanes title will be at stake this Sunday when Saipan Bowling Association holds the season-finale roll-offs at the Saipan Bowling Center.

Twenty bowlers will battle for the coveted title with the winner joining Queen of the Lanes Emi Williams and Bing Prince of the Lanes Zack Cruz to the royal court.

Williams took the Queen of the Lanes tiara after besting five other female keglers. She defeated Yho Villavicencio in the finals, 179-149, last week. Others who vied for the crown, but advanced only into the step-ladder finals were Diane Camacho (third), Ron Cal (fourth), Gigi Zapanta (fifth), and Elena Soll (sixth).

Cruz prevailed over Leanne Yarobwemal in the finals, 188-118, to claim the Bing Prince of the Lanes plum. Cruz moved a step away from clinching the season-finale roll-offs when he downed J.D. Torres in the semis, 174-165, while Yarobwemal pulled off an upset over nine-time monthly winner Raphael Zapanta, 199-153, in the other semis duel.

SAIPAN TRIBUNE
Robert Talavera will be among the 24 keglers who will battle for the 2008 Budweiser King of the Lanes title tomorrow.

This Sunday's final roll-off for the King of the Lanes title are open to the Top 36 bowlers in the SBA ranking system, but only 24 earned ranking points last season.

Raymond Zapanta led in the rankings with his 1,664 points. In second place was Dannie Robles with 1,521 points, followed by Richard Leong (1,432), Simon Manacop (1,429), and Robert Talavera (1,313).

Round off the Top 12 were Raymond Angeles (1,236), Raul Dumapit (1,146), Kitz Barja (1,008), Percy Omechelang (1,000), Paul Pangelinan (785), Jon Eparwa (708), Lito Teodoro (648).

Others who qualified for this Sunday's tournament are Alex Cacdac (485), Ronald Epan (458), Ador Dimaano (416), Efren Cacdac (379), Nick Gutierrez (335), Jon Hensley (248), Jorge Soledad (229), Ferdee Generoso (185), Roger Vales (180), Ray Cruz (127), Chester Bai (96), and Totie Limpin (16).

In the original format, the Top 12 keglers automatically advanced to the nine-game roll-off, which will determine the Top 6 who will move into the step-ladder finals.

Bowlers in the 13th to 36th will compete in a three-game roll-off with the Top 12 finishers joining the Top 12 (in the ranking points) in the nine-game elimination.

But since only 24 earned rankings points, all of them will play in the nine-game roll-offs with the Top 6 moving into the step-ladder finals.

In the step-ladder finals, the pairings for the elimination game will be No. 3 vs. No. 6 (Game 1) and No. 4 vs. No. 5. (Game 2). Winners of the two elimination matches will then advance to the semifinals with the victor of Game 2 facing the No. 2 seed player, and Game 1 winner challenging the No. 1 finisher (in 9-game game roll-offs). Winners of the semis matches will then square off in the finals.

AYUYUS

From Page 28

halftime, 28-17.

The Rays continued their uphill climb in the second half and with Vince Iglesias and Flores firing seven markers apiece in the third canto, Southern outscored Kagman for the first time, 24-18, and moved within five, 41-46.

Southern could have taken the lead at the end of the third period, if not for its dismal free throw shooting. The Rays went only 3-for-8 from the stripe. Kagman also missed a lot of free throws in the third canto going only 4-for-15.

But the Ayuyus redeemed themselves in the fourth period, drilling four charities in the last one minute of the game.

After Southern tied the game at 55-all, with 1:03 left in the game, Jimmy Brel and Tom Pangelinan made one free throw apiece in the Ayuyus' last two offensive plays.

Flores answered with an undergoal stab to tie the game anew. But Edwin Camacho, who made only one free throw in his previous six trips from the foul line in the fourth quarter, connected on two charities to bring the lead back to the Ayuyus with, 59-57, less than 20 seconds left on the clock.

Southern's next offensive play saw Josh Kiyoshi going coast to coast passing his defenders, but at the last minute decided to pass the ball out to a teammate waiting on the left wing. Trevor Ogumoro read the play, jumped, deflected the pass, and completed the steal, and the Ayuyus melted the clock to preserve the win.

Besides making the biggest defensive stop of the game, Ogumoro was also the top-scorer in the match exploding for 21 points. Camacho finished with 16 markers.

Iglecias led Southern with his 14 points.

KHS 59—Ogumoro 21,Camacho 16, Pangelinan 9, Concepcion 9, Brel 4.

SSHS 57—Iglecias 14, Flores 13, Kiyoshi 13, Ajoste 9, Echon 4, Mendoza 3.

Scoring by quarters: 11-3, 28-17, 46-41, 59-57.

NO

From Page 28

CPA now has an 8-1 record tying Freedom Air at the No. 2 spot and behind by only a win against the league-leading Department of Community and Cultural Affairs (9-0). Hopwood remained winless in nine games.

A five-run top of the first was enough to give CPA momentum and put the finishing touches on its easy win with a seven-run fifth inning.

Centerfielder Mark Toves went 4-for-4, scored three runs, one double and two RBIs. Leftfielder Byron Kaipat was only 2-for-3 at-bat, but had two doubles and three RBIs, besides making two runs.

Shortstop Mel Manahane, third baseman Jack Deleon Guerrero, and first baseman Jordan Kosam had two RBIs each.

CPA went 23-for-35 at the plate for an impressive .657 batting average. Hopwood was only 10-for-22 for a batting average of .455.

The first game in the men's division had Procurement & Supply winning via forfeit over Customs.

P&S notched its fourth win in eight games, while Customs dropped to a 2-7 mark.

HOWARD

From Page 28

The Magic can still launch with the best of them. Ten of them have made a three this season—and not a single one has a three-point field-goal percentage under 35.6 percent. Brian Cook, the former Laker, is second on the team at 47.6 percent, and barely gets off the bench.

Now, however, there's a grown-up inside game, known as Howard, whose repertoire once consisted of tomahawk dunks, two-handed dunks and lobs he dunked, but now has right and even left-handed jump hooks, plus the Amare Stoudemire Special (take one dribble, whiz past the other center so fast he gets dizzy.)

Beyond this, Howard has been introduced to something new: Defense.

Coming off a career-high 1.9 blocks a game when Van Gundy arrived last season, Howard went to 2.1 and now leads the league at 3.2.

Orlando's fancy gunners are also No. 4 in defense (to the Lakers' No. 16) and No. 3 in opposing field-goal accuracy (to the Lakers' No. 9)

This is no coincidence. The hard-nosed Van Gundy came up on Pat Riley's staff in Miami, as his brother had come up on Riley's staff in New York.

(The sons of Bill Van Gundy, who coached prep and junior college ball in California, their mother, Cindy, once noted, "We're living proof that insanity is inherited.")

"Stan Van Gundy is a great coach," said Howard, grinning. "He pushes us to our limit. ...

"I'm really glad he's around—even though he gets on my nerves. I hate to hear his voice all the time but he pushes us to be better. ... I could score 50 points but if I don't have two blocks, four blocks, he's going to kill me."

The Magic, coming off a 40-42 season when Van Gundy arrived, went to 52-30 last season and this season looks even better. With its state-of-the-art inside-outside game, the Magic is a matchup nightmare, winning last season's series with Boston, 2-1, and Cleveland, 3-1.

The Magic may even be an equation-changer. Despite the East's renaissance, with the Celtics aging and James' fluid situation in Cleveland, you couldn't point to a single rising young power like the Lakers or the Portland Trail Blazers.

There's one on the horizon now. If Friday night's game doesn't turn out to be a Finals preview this season, there are more seasons coming.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	32	9	.780	_
New Jersey	19	21	.475	12 1/2
Philadelphia	18	20	.474	12 1/2
New York	15	22	.405	15
Toronto	16	24	.400	15 1/2

Southeast Division

Orlando	31	8	.795	_
Atlanta	23	15	.605	7 1/2
Miami	21	17	.553	9 1/2
Charlotte	15	24	.385	16
Washington	7	31	.184	23 1/2

Central Division

Cleveland	30	7	.811	_
Detroit	22	15	.595	8
Milwaukee	19	22	.463	13
Chicago	18	22	.450	13 1/2
Indiana	14	25	.359	17

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

San Antonio	25	12	.676	_
New Orleans	23	12	.657	1
Houston	24	16	.600	2 1/2
Dallas	22	17	.564	4
Memphis	11	27	.289	14 1/2

Northwest Division

Denver	27	13	.675	_
Portland	24	15	.615	2 1/2
Utah	23	16	.590	3 1/2
Minnesota	11	26	.297	14 1/2
Oklahoma City	7	33	.175	20

Pacific Division

L.A. Lakers	31	7	.816	_
Phoenix	22	14	.611	8
Golden State	11	29	.275	21
Sacramento	10	30	.250	22
L.A. Clippers	8	30	.211	23

Yesterday's Games
Portland 105, New Jersey 99
Chicago 102, Cleveland 93, OT
Denver 119, Phoenix 113, OT

SONY OPEN SCORES

HONOLULU (AP)—Scores Thursday in the $5.4 million Sony Open at the 7,044-yard, par-70 Waialae Country Club:

First Round

Shigeki Maruyama	31-34	65
Geoff Ogilvy	33-33	66
Boo Weekley	32-34	66
Brian Gay	33-33	66
Webb Simpson	31-35	66
Nathan Green	32-34	66
Charles Howell III	34-33	67
Luke Donald	35-32	67
Jerry Kelly	32-35	67
Scott Piercy	35-32	67
Chris Stroud	32-35	67
Brendon de Jonge	34-33	67
Bill Haas	34-34	68
Tim Herron	34-34	68
Tim Wilkinson	33-35	68
Rory Sabbatini	35-33	68
Paul Azinger	34-34	68
Gary Woodland	34-34	68
D.A. Points	36-32	68
Steve Marino	34-34	68
Arron Oberholser	34-34	68
K.J. Choi	32-36	68
David Mathis	36-32	68
Michael Letzig	34-35	69
Briny Baird	35-34	69
David Berganio, Jr.	32-37	69
Tom Pernice, Jr.	35-34	69
Harrison Frazar	34-35	69
Zach Johnson	35-34	69
Kenny Perry	35-34	69
Arjun Atwal	34-35	69
Wil Collins	36-33	69
Tim Petrovic	33-36	69
Cliff Kresge	34-35	69
Ted Purdy	35-34	69
George McNeill	34-35	69
Brian Davis	36-33	69
Brendon Todd	35-34	69
Jeff Klauk	32-37	69
John Merrick	35-35	70
Robert Garrigus	34-36	70
Joe Ogilvie	35-35	70
Chez Reavie	34-36	70
Peter Lonard	35-35	70
Glen Day	34-36	70
Kevin Streelman	35-35	70
David Toms	35-35	70
Steve Stricker	35-35	70
Richard S. Johnson	35-35	70
Jarrod Lyle	36-34	70
Bart Bryant	36-35	71
Tag Ridings	38-33	71
Troy Matteson	36-35	71
Pat Perez	36-35	71
Marc Turnesa	33-38	71
Steve Lowery	35-36	71
Jeff Quinney	37-34	71
Brad Faxon	35-36	71
Ryuji Imada	34-37	71
D.J. Trahan	36-35	71
Tommy Gainey	34-37	71
Tadd Fujikawa	36-35	71
Vaughn Taylor	35-36	71
Tim Clark	34-37	71
Jeff Overton	38-33	71
Daniel Chopra	36-35	71
Adam Scott	36-35	71
Stewart Cink	36-35	71
Sean O'Hair	34-37	71
Mark Wilson	34-37	71
Greg Owen	37-34	71
Junpei Takayama	35-36	71
Scott Sterling	37-34	71
Troy Kelly	37-34	71
Azuma Yano	37-34	71
Casey Wittenberg	34-37	71
Spencer Levin	37-34	71
Aron Price	34-37	71
Bob Estes	37-35	72
Kevin Na	35-37	72
Cameron Beckman	36-36	72
Chris Couch	36-36	72
Davis Love III	37-35	72
Jason Dufner	35-37	72
Lorens Chan	37-35	72
Hiroshi Iwata	34-38	72
Bill Lunde	36-36	72
Shintaro Kai	36-36	72
Michael Allen	36-36	72
Bubba Watson	36-36	72
John Senden	36-36	72
Bo Van Pelt	34-38	72
Alex Cejka	38-34	72
Chris DiMarco	36-36	72
Ernie Els	36-36	72
Marc Leishman	36-36	72
Hideto Tanihara	36-36	72
Nicholas Thompson	38-35	73
Billy Mayfair	38-35	73
Parker McLachlin	36-37	73
Andres Romero	39-34	73
Eric Axley	36-37	73
Matt Kuchar	37-36	73
Peter Tomasulo	39-34	73
Matthew Borchert	36-37	73
Alex Aragon	38-35	73
Greg Chalmers	33-40	73
Dean Wilson	35-38	73
Jeff Sluman	35-38	73
Joe Durant	34-39	73
Greg Kraft	37-36	73
Paul Goydos	36-37	73
J.B. Holmes	38-35	73
Carl Pettersson	35-38	73
Rich Beem	38-35	73
Matt Bettencourt	38-35	73
Jimmy Walker	37-36	73
James Oh	36-37	73
Derek Fathauer	37-36	73
Tomohiro Kondo	37-36	73
Kirk Triplett	36-38	74
Will MacKenzie	36-38	74
Kris Blanks	38-36	74
James Nitties	34-40	74
Ricky Barnes	34-40	74
Leif Olson	35-39	74
Sang-moon Bae	36-38	74
Loren Roberts	37-37	74
Notah Begay III	38-36	74
Colt Knost	40-35	75
Martin Laird	36-39	75
Corey Pavin	38-37	75
John Mallinger	39-37	76
Heath Slocum	36-40	76
Tyler Aldridge	35-41	76
John Lepak	39-37	76
Johnson Wagner	40-36	76
Scott Gutschewski	38-38	76
Rick Price	39-38	77
Jeff Maggert	37-40	77
John Lynch	39-39	78
Brian Vranesh	43-38	81
Darron Stiles	39-39	78 WD
John Huston	38-41	79 WD

By The Associated Press

BUDWEISER SOFTBALL STANDINGS

Men's Division

DCCA	9	0
Freedom Air	8	1
CPA	8	1
No Zone	8	2
Joeten Motors	7	3
Beach Boys	6	2
Legislature	6	4
Docomo	6	4
DLNR	5	5
DEQ/CRM	5	5
POI	4	4
P & S	4	4
Law & Order	3	6
PSS	3	6
CUC	3	7
CHC	2	6
Customs	2	7
PIC	2	7
Mayors	1	9
Hopwood	0	9

Women's Division

NMC	7	1
DCCA	3	3
Finance	3	4
CUC	3	4
CHC	1	5

Deng, Rose lead Bulls over Cavs in OT

Derrick Rose was having so much fun late in the game, he couldn't help but let out a primal scream. Then, after a dramatic finish, he let out a big sigh of relief. 25

Saipan Tribune
Sports

24 to vie for King of the Lanes title

The 2008 Budweiser King of the Lanes title will be at stake this Sunday when Saipan Bowling Association holds the season-finale roll-offs at the Saipan Bowling Center. 27

Ayuyus edge Rays in MISO

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Kagman High School survived Saipan Southern High Schools' second half rally to eke out a 59-57 victory in the boys varsity division of the 2008-2009 MISO Basketball League Thursday night at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

The Ayuyus buried four free throws in the last one minute of the game, while Trevor Ogumoro made a big defensive stop in the closing seconds of the match allowing Kagman to win its debut game.

The defending champion Rays absorbed back-to-back losses after bowing to the MHS Dolphins on Jan. 9, 55-63.

Southern played catch-up most of the way, as it struggled at the start of the match making it into the scoreboard only with less than a minute in the first period.

Lloyd Mendoza split his free throws to end the Rays' long drought and later canned a two-pointer in the closing seconds cutting the Ayuyus' lead to eight.

Southern began picking up its scoring in the second period with Nathan Flores and Bryan Ajoste finding their marks. But the Ayuyus still outgunned the Rays, 17-14, to keep the lead at

See AYUYUS on Page 27

Kagman High School's Ryan Lisua, right, barrels through the defense of Southern's Oscar Masga during their game in the MISO caging Thursday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Tony DLG notches January Ace

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Tony Deleon Guerrero missed the list of monthly Ace winners last year, but this season he was the first on the roll ruling Saipan Golfers Association's season-opening tournament Sunday at the Coral Ocean Point.

Tony bested 19 other participants in the weekend tournament to claim the January Ace title. He shot a net 66 for a two-stroke win over Martin Sablan and Jose I. Sablan.

Martin and Jose nailed identical net scores of 68, but the former took the second spot beating the latter on the scorecard playoffs on hole No. 8. Martin double bogeyed the par-4 No. 8, while Jose made a triple bogey.

Deleon Guerrero

Tony, a former deputy director of Division of Environmental Quality, started sluggishly with his 45 on the front nine, but the 18-handicapper finished strong with a 39 on the back for a gross 84.

The 24-handicapper Martin tallied a 47 and 45 on the front and back nines, respectively, for a gross 92, while the 22-handicapper Jose drilled a 46 in the first nine holes and 44 in the last nine for a gross 90.

Das Krishnan, an 18-handicapper, finished fourth with his net 71 and gross 88 following a 43 and 45 on the front and back nines, respectively.

Ron Hodges completed the Top 5 beating two other players in the scorecard playoffs. The 5-handicapper Hodges recorded the lowest gross score (76) firing a 39 and 37 on the front and back nines, respectively. Hodges, Peter Rojas, and Art Deleon Guerrero all scored a net 71.

Other participants in SGA's first tournament of the season and their net scores were Ray Dela Cruz (72), Mariano Fajardo (72), Jess Castro (74), Ray Salas (74), Joe Rosario (74), 2008 Ace of Aces champion Joe Demapan (75), Steve Balakrishna (76), Jung Teack (78), Nobert Sablan (79), Ray San Nicolas (81), Larry I. Deleon Guerrero (81), and Ben Aldan (81).

Castro, Demapan, Rojas, Hodges, and Frank Rosario tallied two birdies apiece, while Balakrishna, Dela Cruz, Art, and Larry made one each.

In the longest drive contest, Fajardo won on the par-4 hole No. 6, while Art prevailed on hole No. 15.

Art also saved par on the par-3 No. 3, while Rojas (No. 7), Fajardo (No. 12), and Joe Sablan (No. 14) had the same feat on the three other par-3 holes.

No Zone grounds Jets in men's softball league

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

No Zone zoomed past the Joeten Jets, 15-9, in the men's division game in the 2008 Inter Government/Business Softball League Thursday at the Capital Hill Ballfield.

Pitcher Carl Hocog and No Zone's defense limited the Jets to four hits and three runs in the last three innings en route to the former's eighth win in 10 games.

The Jets absorbed their third loss in 10 matches.

A five-run top of the second kept the Jets afloat, as they were behind by only three, 6-9, after four complete innings.

The Jets added one more run at the top of the fifth cutting No Zone's lead to two.

But No Zone answered with a five-run bottom of the fifth making three earned runs and scoring two more off the Jets errors to widen the gap, 14-7.

The Jets never recovered from thereon, as they nailed only two runs in the sixth and failed to score in the last inning.

Second baseman Jerry Ayuyu and third baseman Manny Sablan blasted one homer apiece for No Zone, which moved up from fourth to solo third place after winning its fourth straight game.

Ayuyu and Sablan made their round-trippers all in the first inning, which ended with No Zone in front, 3-0. Ayuyu and Sablan had two RBIs each, matching catcher Jess Wabol's feat. Wabol was 3-for-4 at-bat and scored two runs. Sablan was 2-for-3, while Ayuyu hit 2-for-4

Both teams recorded a batting average of below .500 with No Zone going only 18-for-37 for a .462 clip. The Jets were 13-for-32 for a batting average of .406.

Second baseman Hector Efraim was the lone slugger to have a perfect stint at the plate going 3-for-3. He scored two runs and had one RBI.

CPA 18, Hopwood 7

Commonwealth Ports Authority gained a share of second place in the team standings after an 18-7 triumph over Hopwood.

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By MARK HEISLER
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Howard-led Magic becoming a force in the East

And now, the Magic's Mystery Tour.

Lakerdom is gearing up for Monday's game here with Cleveland, the latest in a series of, quote, possible Finals previews, unquote, but don't look now, there's one Friday night, too.

With less fanfare, or none, the Lakers are about to play the NBA's hottest team, which doesn't happen to have LeBron James, Kobe Bryant, Kevin Garnett, Paul Pierce or Ray Allen.

This team isn't part of the old Lakers-Celtics rivalry or the new Celtics-Cavaliers rivalry, or any rivalry outside Florida.

The last time it got past the second round of the playoffs, Shaquille O'Neal played there. It was so long ago, Shaq hadn't even heard of Kobe, although he was taking an increasingly dimmer view of Penny Hardaway.

Aw, you guessed it.

It's the Orlando Magic, which isn't mentioned in the same breath with the Lakers, Celtics and Cavaliers, but is right there with them at 31-8, which is even more impressive when you consider the Magic started 0-2.

This tour has been Magical, all right. After starting the trip with a win in San Antonio, the Magic dropped an NBA-record 23 three-pointers on the Kings in a 139-107 rout.

Even those pesky pundits have noticed. ESPN's Jeff Van Gundy said he was revising his earlier view that the Magic wasn't a serious contender.

Van Gundy is the brother of Orlando Coach Stan Van Gundy, so this is what you'd call a tough audience.

"What most of the people who are coaches or have been coaches in the league say, the record is what counts," said Stan at his team's practice Thursday in Hawthorne, Calif.

"That's what you're judged by. We could talk about subjective stuff and matchups and everything else but 31-8 is 31-8.

"Cut it however you want, it's 31-8. Unlike some teams, we haven't played an inordinate number of home games. We haven't played five more games at home. As a matter of fact, by the end of the trip, we'll have played three more away.

"We're 31-8. Are we that good? Time will tell."

Actually, the Lakers have played six more at home. With their "road" game against the Clippers, they've been in Staples Center for 23 of 38 games.

But do people go around saying the Lakers have had a soft schedule?

N-o-o-o-o.

Dwight Howard, the Magic's 23-year-old prodigy, now blossoming into a superstar, tried telling his Olympics teammates in China how good the Magic would be.

They were nice enough to listen politely, for a second or two.

"They kind of laughed it off a little bit," said Howard. "Which, the way we ended the season last year, you can understand."

Last spring, when the Detroit Pistons dispatched them in five games of their second-round series, the Magic was regarded as a group of fancy gunners.

At that point, the old maxim, live by the jump shot, die by the jump shot, was very much to the point.

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